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Fox

HUNTING.



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THE CAMPING-OUT SERIES.

VOLUME V.

FOX-HUNTING,

AS RECORDED BY RAED.

EDITED BY C. A. STEPHENS.

ILLUSTRATED.



BOSTON :

JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,
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1873
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WASHINGTON

1873

NOTE.

WE are well aware that the title of our little narrative will have to brave public opinion. Our people generally despise fox-hunting: not without pretty good reason, it is to be feared; for your local fox-hunter is often no saint. In short, what the "impecunious Bohemian" is to the town, the fox-hunter is to the country, — "poor, slack, and shiftless," in rustic phrase; "too lazy to work," the farmers say of him.

Furthermore, fox-hunting, considered as a business, is notoriously unprofitable. This of itself would be stigma enough in any average Yankee community. Our people have a radical antipathy to unremunerative callings. They will neither engage in such, nor yet, so far as public sentiment goes, allow their fellow-citizens to do so. Hence

a hound following at a man's heels, and claiming him as master, discounts his owner's character at a pretty heavy percentum.

But, beyond these considerations, there is undoubtedly another, and what may be termed an *hereditary*, antipathy to this sport. In England, the squires, even the lords and dukes, used to hunt the fox. It was a standard amusement with the landed gentry. The land was theirs, and they overrode it at will: fences and fields were no barriers to them. Now, the class of people who emigrated from Old England to New England were not of the fox-hunting class: they were of the class the fox-hunters had overridden. They brought with them well-defined objections to the sport. Our "institutions" were projected on a different plan. No troop of aristocrats would be allowed to ride down our fences, and poach our fields. The law would stop them promptly; and, if the law did not, *something else* would, very quick. Our people have their rights, and the temper to sustain them.

Nevertheless, an infusion of fox-hunting blood must have come over even in "The Mayflower." It crops out here and there. In every inland county

there is always at least *one* whose instincts declare the fatherland, be it never so rudely.

But we should not, methinks, deal too hardly with this hardy old Anglo-Norman sport. Much of the robust English health started here ; and we cannot but hope some good from fox-hunting on American soil. Our youth, our young ladies especially, are lamentably destitute of healthy out-door sports. The ill effects of this lack are sad enough, Heaven knows, to fill us with well-grounded anxiety for the future, lest we see the delicately-beautiful Anglo-American fade utterly from the Western continent.

Some such feeling as this has emboldened us to submit the account of an attempt to Americanize; in a clumsy way, this grand old field-sport of our ancestors.

J. W. R.

Boston, May, 1873.

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FOX-HUNTING.

CHAPTER I.

The Old "Curlew" to be turned into a Crack Yacht. — Hamilton's "Metaphysics." — We fall into Difficulties. — Kit's Letter. — A Gay Young Lady's Advice to a Youngster. — The Fox-hunting Scheme.

IT had been our intention to sail for Europe in October, after our return from the Geysers in August.

But a matter of party pride came up. We did not care to present ourselves in Old-World waters in our roughly-appointed schooner.

"The Curlew" was a stanch, new, finely-modelled craft, rakish and fleet enough: but she was not very stylish; decidedly too homely for European ports. The more we thought of it, the more we grew sure of this. Something stylish and "nobby," and, withal, fleet, — like the old "America," — was our dream. We could not think of so far demeaning our national yacht-reputation as to present ourselves in the English Channel on the present rough vessel.

But "The Curlew" had "good points." Capt. Mazard declared her hull couldn't be bettered. To finish, refurnish, and, in a word, turn the schooner into a gay, crack yacht, with "grand saloon" and state-rooms, and perhaps rechristen her as "The Rambler," or something of that sort, — all to the tune of fifteen hundred or two thousand, — was our scheme. Capt. Mazard undertook to superintend the job. But we could not count on her being ready for sea again before March or April. We set ourselves, therefore, to pass the winter in study; and, in order to make a brave beginning, we entered on the month of November with Hamilton's "Metaphysics."

In explanation, I should say that we had feared that perhaps so much Tyndall and Darwin might be too *physical*. A well-meaning but utterly deluded elderly friend had recommended Hamilton's "Metaphysics" as a work well calculated to restore the proper intellectual equipoise. We immediately invested in four volumes of Bowen's American edition, and fell to work. Kit, meanwhile, had to return to Maine; but he took his "Hamilton," and agreed to keep pace with us, and report every week.

Our programme was to thoroughly master twelve pages *per diem*, five days in a week. Never was there a better-laid or a more conscientious plan. But, to my chagrin, I can but record that the result achieved during the next fortnight is best typified by an utter hiatus, — perfectly void of any thing definite or tangible.

Nothing disrespectful to the learned author or editor is for a moment to be inferred. Of so respectable a work as Hamilton's "Metaphysics" I always feel to speak guard-

edly, if at all. I have no sort of doubt that Sir William Hamilton was a great man, a transcendent philosopher. It was Wash who first headed an insurrection against him, in which Wade perversely joined. They both burned their books, and started for Cambridge to hunt up the Alford professor. I believe they wanted to ask him a few civil questions.

That night there came a letter from Kit. His first weekly letter had not come as promised. He wrote, —

“DEAR FELLOWS, — How goes it? and how get you on with Hamilton? What lively stuff this metaphysics is! I dare say you’re progressing famously. But, fellows, to tell the truth, I can’t say as much for myself. I, in short, have given it up, — the whole thing, — and *burnt the book*; for I don’t mean to have it lying round to remind me of defeat. I suppose Raed will think this is an evidence of mental weakness; and I expect it is: but I can’t help it. Money wouldn’t tempt me to begin on that volume again. Somehow it doesn’t agree with my infirmities at all; aggravates ’em. But really, Raed, I begun on the thing with all honesty and good will. I went over almost a hundred pages. I meant and expected to get some idea as to what the mind is, and how it thinks; and, all through the first seventy-five pages, I kept thinking I should shortly come out to something definite, till I got utterly confounded.

“It’s my private opinion that the old fellow didn’t know what he was talking about. Yes, sir; I got so tremendously muddled, that I didn’t actually know enough to undress myself nights. Fact. I actually got into bed

with my hat on two nights in succession. When it came to that, I thought I had better take off Hamilton. You see, *perception*, *apperception*, *sub-apperception*, *super-apperception*, *super-sub-apperception*, got so twisted up in my head, that I couldn't think straight.

"Grandmother did really suspect that I had 'taken to drink' at first. Then she got alarmed, and gave Wealthy private instructions to watch me on the sly, and find out where I got it; for I used to take the book in my pocket, and walk off along the road to read and reflect. Evenings, the old lady eyed me anxiously over her knitting. I don't know what she thought ailed me; I wasn't in a state to consider: but I know she has seemed greatly relieved since I burned the book. Probably the symptoms are less alarming.

"Really, Raed, I've not half so good an idea of what the *mind* is as I had before I began Hamilton. The learned philosopher has led me a most confusing chase. Reminds me forcibly of the way I got served half a dozen years ago, when I was at school at W. I was nothing but a *boy* then, you know. One day we had visitors, — a whole bevy of pretty girls (strictly speaking, I suppose I ought to say a gal-axy). 'Twas a full term. Myself, and the fellow that sat with me, had to give up our seat to the company, and take a front-seat on the other side of the room.

"I well remember one of the girls. She was a black-eyed little Jezebel. She glued my eyes, first thing. I was just such a little Nimshi then as to sit and ogle. She caught me at it, and kept catching me all the afternoon. By and by I saw her writing in my Reader,

and turning over the leaves. Better believe I felt curious enough!

“As soon as they had gone, I pounced on the Reader, and opened it near the first part, where she had turned down a leaf. There I saw, —

‘If my name you wish to see,
Turn to page 403.’

“I instantly turned, and found on the margin, —

‘Saucy boy with the little pig-eye,
What makes you look so awful shy?
Turn to page 308;
Something there doth thee await.’

“Sheepish, but eager still, I shuffled over, and discovered, —

‘Pretty boy with lippy ears,
Calm your silly, childish fears:
Hie to page 402;
Something there I’ve writ for you.’

“Beginning to get indignant, but with unabated curiosity, I looked over to the page indicated, and espied, —

‘Boy, it will be many a year
Before your mustache will appear.
Wait with patience: I may sign
My full name on 29.’

“Mad as a hen, I whirled back, and found, —

‘Changed my mind. But don’t you fret:
You’re nothing but a shaver yet.
Don’t you think I’m rather pretty?
Look on page 130.’

“This was awful ; but I turned with vindictive haste, to find, —

‘Bubby-boy, this never’ll do :
You must learn a thing or two.
Take my advice, you little cub :
Never stare at ladies, bub.’

“Metaphysically speaking, Hamilton has given me just about such a chase. Only Black-Eyes *did* me neatly and completely, besides giving me one of the most useful lessons I ever learned ; whereas Hamilton has bored me half to death, and, withal, got me into a hopeless muddle. If I could only wipe all this metaphysical confusion out of my mind as easily as I rubbed Black-Eyes’ pencillings out of my Reader, I should be well satisfied.

“Candidly, Raed, I don’t believe it pays to torture one’s reasoning powers with the tortuous platitudes of these old philosophers. It’s plain enough that they know next to nothing about the mind. Mental action and consciousness doubtless proceed from certain simple conditions of *matter* and *motion* thus far inscrutable. These old fellows make the mind out to be a fearfully complex thing in their utter ignorance of vital physics. I repeat, I don’t believe it pays to confound one’s self with their long-spun lucubrations. If one was shut up in a monastery, it might pay to study Hamilton by way of killing time ; though I submit that time would die hard. So I shall go back to Tyndall and Huxley and Youman and Darwin. Those scientific fellows, at least, do know something of what they are talking about : the metaphysician don’t, — the way

I look at it. They are a mere set of *guessers*, and dull ones at that. Any Yankee could outguess them on their own grounds; and would, if it were a paying business. I don't know, fellows, that your experience has been any thing like mine. But, by way of getting back to my former life, I'm going into fox-hunting; and I wish you would come down. I'll show you some sport. I've got hounds and a famous *fox-bait*; also snow-shoes, and every thing necessary for a jolly burst at it. Now, don't disappoint me. Let's have a dash at Nature to brush away these metaphysical cobwebs."

"Hurrah!" Wash shouted as I read off this invitation. "Bless the fellow! Of course we will go!"

CHAPTER II.

The Trip to Maine. — The Double Wagon. — A Grand Old Fireplace. — Some Scorched Overshoes. — "The Freshman." — The Latin Lesson. — "*Scribo, scribere, scratcheye, scrinktum.*" — A Talk about Latin. — Some Sweet Cider, and how it was made. — A Good Templar. — The Thirteen-inch Sponge-Russets. — Some Music.

WE went down to Portland Monday afternoon. Tuesday was a bitter day, a stinging day, cold and leaden as the realm of Dis. Late in the afternoon, we arrived, chilled to the marrow, at the memorable "forks" of the road, and stumbled out of the stage in a state of torpor. Kit was there with a double wagon, waiting, muffled up in buffaloes. His purple-red, cheery face was welcome enough in itself. We were all too benumbed to say much after a wintry "How are ye?" and "Pile in!"

Kit threw in our guns, trunks, &c.; then tucked the buffaloes round us, and drove off at a great rate, both horses on a gallop, along the *hubbly* road. Before our teeth had had time to fairly chatter out another tattoo, the wagon rumbled into the yard, and pulled up with a jerk that came near robbing me of the tip of my tongue.

"Grandmother's" fair, broad, pleasant countenance was in the door. To do her justice, she pretty nearly filled it, as I dimly perceived through frosty eye-lashes. "Grandfather," with white hair, but blue eyes, came sturdily out to take the team. Kit led the way; and we all made a rush through to the sitting-room, where, in a fireplace that might have sufficed for Valhalla, there flamed and roared a bonfire fit to celebrate the presidential election. We charged up to it; but the hot blast against our faces arrested us.

"You'll burn yourselves!" Kit exclaimed, and uncere- moniously pulled us back by the coat-tails. But, with a half-frozen person's infatuation, we kept crowding up for some seconds, and, in truth, kept Kit dragging us back.

"Man alive!" he shouted, catching Wade around the waist from behind. "You'll burn your boots to a cin- der, and your pants too! Get back to these chairs I've set. You'll be hot enough there, I promise you, in three minutes. Whew!" for Wash's overshoes had begun to smoke with a terrific stench of caoutchouc.

Finally, but not till we were all more or less *yellowed*, we were bullied, and pulled back about ten feet to the ring of chairs. And, indeed, that was as near as prudence would allow of, as we soon perceived. I never saw such a fire in-doors. It was absolutely dangerous. Such a roar of devouring flames! In front, on a pair of gigan- tic "dogs," lay a rock-maple fore-stick as big round as a barrel; while behind was piled in four-foot wood, — not quite half a cord, perhaps, but certainly as much as we could all four have carried at once.

When we rushed in, all this mass of heat-emitting maple was well under way.

"But where are the girls, — Miss Nell and Miss Wealthy?" Wade asked.

Surely I had missed Sunshine.

"At school," said Kit. "Be at home soon, though. Winter school is in session now."

Grandmother came in with a pitcher of ginger-tea, her standard antidote for chills of all sorts. We all drank of it on general principles. Kit grinned encouragingly. While this was going on, talking and laughing were heard from without. The door opened; and a tall young man with a very handsome countenance passed through the sitting-room into the front hall. I noticed that he wore a black overcoat of not very modern cut, and had on dark pants. I have rarely seen a better face, or a prettier dark hazel eye. He had not removed his hat. Evidently our presence there was a surprise to him; for he glanced rather astonishedly at us, but at once assumed a dignified mien, which assured me that he had seen comparatively little of the world.

"Who was that?" asked Wash.

"Oh! that's the schoolmaster, Mr. Graves," said Kit. "He boards here. I'll introduce you this evening. He's a freshman from Bowdoin; teaching to help out his education, I believe. Quite a retiring, modest sort of a fellow. Still he doesn't think small-beer of himself: I promise you that much. Counts a good deal on being a college-student; more on that than on his own abilities, I sometimes fancy. Look at the two big lexicons on the table there! Studies evenings; and he



gives the girls Latin lessons too. Oh, he's great on Latin and geometry! Can give every theorem in the first four books of 'Davies's Legendre' *verbatim*, he told me. But it surprised him considerably to see me use the theodolite, as we did last September. He wondered where I had learned so much. 'Why,' said he, 'we don't have *that* till the sophomore-year down at Bowdoin!' I told him we had it the *freshman-year on our yacht*. Since that, he's been a little shy; doesn't expatiate on the wonders of geometry so much as he did; and he eyes that theodolite up in my room as if it were Jack in a box.

"But he is a good fellow," Kit concluded a little hastily.

Nevertheless, I detected just the least bit of despite in this description, at which I wondered a little; for Kit is rarely or never malicious in this way. It puzzled me, and kept recurring a score of times within the next fortnight. Afterwards I got a glimpse of the reason.

At supper we had the pleasure of making Mr. Graves's acquaintance. He was rather reserved; and his style of conversation was decidedly bookish. Latin-derived adjectives of three and even four syllables encumbered his talk. Worse still, he evidently plumed himself on their use, and introduced a more than usual number for our benefit. This would have made him a bore of the "first water," had he not displayed—quite unconsciously—glimpses of original thought, and, unless I mistook, a sterling character at bottom. I drew him into some talk about the studies pursued at Bowdoin. He made mention of them with a mixture of pride and

waggishness; which is, I believe, peculiar to college-students of the first and second years. I referred to the custom of "hazing" freshmen. This at length set his tongue running. He let go his Latin adjectives, and related "hazing tricks" with a gusto which set us all a-laughing, more at his relish of them than of the pranks themselves; for these latter struck me as being rather stale: and I could but wonder at the enthusiasm with which this Latinized young fellow recounted the emptying of slop-buckets on the heads of his fellow-students. But college-fellows have, I remembered, a weakness for such salutes. Perhaps Nature thus revenges herself for too much "dead languages" by giving them up to coarse practical jokes which outsiders can but regard with derision.

Wash and Wade were meanwhile chatting and laughing with the girls. I sincerely hoped Wash would have the grace to behave himself; for a long acquaintance with him had taught me, that, once well off on a frolic, he never knows when to stop. From knocking about on a yacht, one is apt to get out of the grooves of social propriety, and gain a proficiency in phrases rather *spicy* for family use. Indeed, this is one of the evils we have to keep watch and ward over.

It was a source of relief to me to observe, from time to time, that the old lady was smiling kindly, and giving us all the full tide of her grandmotherly sympathy.

As for Kit, he magnanimously devoted himself to the care and replenishing of our plates; in short, made a "table-girl" of himself, and a very attentive one.

It was easy to see that the Freshman regarded us all with a magisterial eye, and that both the girls paid him a vast stipend of awe and admiration, enforced mainly, no doubt, by those four-syllabled adjectives. I took note that the word "inscrutable," repeated twice in the course of the meal, made them fairly catch their breaths, and, if I did not fancy it, caused even the old lady to show the white of her eye for a moment.

Ah! this national schoolmaster of ours is a power in the land.

We were, of course, anxious to see the hounds and the mysterious fox-bait Kit had hinted at; but it was dark ere we had finished supper.

"Better wait till to-morrow morning, I guess," Kit remarked aside. "We shall need daylight for it."

So all hands adjourned to the sitting-room again; and an era of general sociability began. It soon appeared, however, that these evenings were, in part at least, devoted to study, and that a certain Latin lesson was due from the girls. Indeed, I had all along noticed that they were rather nervously turning over a couple of medium-sized volumes in that dark-green cloth sacred to the text of Prof. Harkness; and at length Mr. Graves inquired preliminarily whether that "lesson" were committed.

Miss Nell replied, a little anxiously, to the effect that they would wish to put it over till to-morrow. The reason was apparent enough. It was not surprising that they did not care to recite Latin before a roomful of young gentlemen. But the master was quite unwilling to excuse them. I think he felt a little proud of his

class; possibly proud of his Latin. We hastened to assure them that we should be utterly unable to criticise; and, after considerable hesitation, the recitation commenced. It was the conjugation of *audio* in the active voice, together with questions relative to the parts of Latin verbs of the third and fourth conjugations.

As to the merits of the recitation, it would be rash for the writer to hazard an opinion; but it seemed to be given with very considerable fluency. There were a few hesitations; but these, I am convinced, were occasioned rather by our embarrassing presence than from negligence in study.

Mr. Graves was very accurate with the parts of the Latin verbs. They seemed to flash out from his memory with the nicety of steel plate. He had a mind that would take a sharp discipline, and retain it: so I judged. But this finished exactitude held the young ladies in a good deal of awe.

"The parts of *scribo*, if you please, Miss Wealthy?" he asked.

"*Scribo, scribere*," began Wealthy bravely enough; but happening at that instant to catch Wade's black, attentive eye, she stumbled, made a mess of it, and stopped short in blushing confusion. It hurt my feelings fairly.

"Why, Wealth!" cried Kit. "Forgotten *scribo*! Just as easy as to snap your fingers, — *scribo, scribere, scratcheye, scrinktum*!"

He said it mischievously; and the outrageousness of the parody amused us all prodigiously, except the teacher. I saw in a moment that he was hurt or

offended; both, perhaps. He said nothing, save to gravely set Miss Wealthy right; at which Kit seemed all the more amused.

I wondered again at this almost imperceptible flavor of spite. I thought, for a moment, that Wash seemed to notice it a little curiously; but subsequent events have rendered him rather reticent on that and kindred topics. It passed; and a desultory conversation on the merits of Latin, as a study, sprang up.

Mr. Graves urged that the study of Latin was necessary, because hundreds and thousands of our words in every-day use were made of Latin word-roots, with Latin prefixes and suffixes. Unless a person understood the meanings and uses of these, he could never be classed as a well-educated person.

"But," argued Kit, "do not, to a far greater extent too, the old Anglo-Saxon word-roots enter into and make up the very warp and woof of the English language? and yet you say nothing about studying these, — the language of our ancestors. Why do you urge so long and exhaustive a study of Latin and Greek, and entirely slight the old Saxon tongue?"

No better reply occurred to Mr. Graves than to say that both should be studied; the one, perhaps, as much as the other.

"But how can the old Norse languages be studied, when all a man's youth is used up on Cæsar, Sallust, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus, Xenophon, Homer, Demosthenes, and Sophocles?" demanded Kit.

And so they had it. Both were in earnest, taking fair and serious grounds for argument. Mr. Graves

especially contended, that in law, in theology, and in medicine, as also in the nomenclature of natural history, botany, and physiology, a knowledge of Latin was absolutely necessary in order that a student may understandingly pursue his professions and studies.

It seemed so. I thought he made out a very strong case on this latter point.

But we all agreed with Kit, that the time spent on Greek and Latin was disproportionate; that these languages were allowed to take up far too much time.

Wash gave it as his opinion, that one year of Latin and Greek would be as much time as could be justly set apart for them.

Kit thought a second year should be spent on Old English and the Norse tongues.

Mr. Graves did not agree with us; but he admitted that Latin occupied more time than could, with justice, be given it. He argued, however, that the course of studies pursued at college (Bowdoin) was about as good a one as could be laid down.

Kit laughed at this opinion: he believed, with the rest of us, that scientific studies should occupy a full two-thirds of the time.

I felt sure, however, that the "flavor of spite" which I had fancied to exist between them did not originate in their diverse opinions on educational matters. They were both perfectly fair and candid in argument, and showed no signs of losing temper. I began to think I had been mistaken altogether as to it.

It occurred to me that we might get some benefit from Mr. Graves's Latin; and, since he had argued so stoutly

for it, I asked him, as a favor, to make out for us a list of one hundred Latin words that entered most frequently in the "compounds" of our language, together with their "roots," and a few common derivatives as examples of the way these derivatives are formed. He seemed pleased with the idea; and I was glad to see that he looked upon the request as a compliment to his arguments. He promised to do so in the course of a week.

Kit and Miss Nell had gone out meanwhile. From certain sounds of talk which seemed to come up through the floor, I concluded they were down cellar. Presently they re-appeared from the dining-room, — Kit with a willow-basket of apples (sponge-russets, of fabulous size), and Miss Nell with a large pitcher and glasses. The pitcher was soon declared to contain cider; at which Wash held up his hands in comical despair. He is a "Good Templar."

But is a Good Templar really holden to resist *cider* when poured out by a pretty girl who playfully raises her own glass "to touch"? Well, all is, I know one Good Templar who didn't; though I am bound in honor not to disclose his name.

There is always a dodge with cider, however. Cider is of two kinds, — *sweet* cider and *sour* cider. Just where the line of demarcation between the two obtains place is not very clear. Perhaps it is not fixed. I never knew a Good Templar who ever drank sour cider; and, now I think of it, I am inclined to believe that sour cider is wholly a myth.

Sweet cider is, as everybody knows, a very innoxious beverage.

"Is it sweet?" I asked.

"Certainly, sir," replied Kit blandly. "Just tapped. Try it."

I tried. . . . Such cider! Never tasted any thing like it! It did have a little of "the fuddle" to it; but, of course, that had nothing at all to do with its sweetness. It was as rich in color as port wine.

We learned that this barrel was a sort of "fatted calf" which Kit had been keeping, and had only tapped in honor of our arrival; and, as this barrel of cider is a good deal mixed up with my narrative, I may be pardoned some gossip concerning it and its general get-up. In the first place, it was made of grafted fruit exclusively, — Baldwins, Greenings, and Scotch-sweets. So far as practicable, all wormy apples had been thrown out. This circumstance was a comforting one; for, generally speaking, each barrel of merchantable cider made since the year of grubs (1861) contains the juices of about — at a moderate estimate — forty thousand fat white worms! To resume, the apples had been carefully sorted; and, after expressing, Kit had put into this barrel a half-pound of white mustard (whole), five blood-beets (nicely sliced up), and three pounds of raw beef-steak. The mustard was to keep it *sweet*, the beets to give it *color*, the beef to give it *body*. Happy concatenation!

"Gentle cask of mellow" cider!

Ah! if I were only a poet, I would celebrate that barrel of apple-juice *à la Horace*, or I'd — cave the head of it in. Full many a long, fox-less tramp has it cheered up; full many a happy evening has it made happier, — always

in moderation. Associated, too, with its rich color, rises in memory a vision — ahem! Ah! it's no sort of use to try the poetical: I can't fetch it. In plain prose, it was plaguy good stuff: came as near old Jove's nectar as any thing that has been gotten up since his time.

Then those russets! If there is one apple in the world which stands superior in its season to all other apples, it is the sponge-russet. (I should remark, perhaps, that Wash prefers the gillyflower; but his opinion is manifestly absurd.) Some of these mammoth russets were thirteen inches in girth, with the flavor and quality in proportion. Picture us sitting at a safe distance before that cyclopean hearth, eating thirteen-inch russets, and quaffing beakers of *sweet* cider, and you have a scene to match Valhalla, from which not even the Valkyrs were absent, toned and beautified by Yankee girlhood.

We sang too. There was a parlor-organ. I presume our music would scarcely deserve a "review:" yet with Wade's tenor, the Freshman's bass, and Miss Nell's clear soprano, we managed to please ourselves; and, as there was nobody else to hear, it can be nobody's else business.

These good folks keep early hours. By half-past ten I noticed a movement which indicated "bed-time;" and we all acquiesced, the more readily that our long ride in the cold wind had rendered us unusually stupid and sleepy. Lighting a little kerosene-lamp, Kit conducted us up the broad but uncarpeted flight of stairs in the "front hall." Our chambers were two square rooms on the second floor, connecting the one with the other. A bright fire in a fireplace of smaller dimensions warmed

and lighted the first and southernmost of the two; and, by leaving the door open, the second was rendered comfortable.

"We four fellows shall have to *bunk* here," explained our young host. "You can choose of the two rooms to your liking."

Having in mind certain hygienic precepts to the effect that it is healthier to sleep in cool rooms, Wash and myself chose the fireless one. Wade, who shivers a good deal in our climate, was glad of the bed nearer the fire. He and Kit occupied the fireplace-room together; it being a part of Kit's duty to tend the fire.

"But where does the Freshman bestow himself?" Wash inquired.

"Oh! he has the spare room down stairs," said Kit. "The spare room is always sacred to the schoolmaster, who generally boards here. . . . But what do you think of him — this Graves?" he asked after we had sat warming our feet a while.

The question was put a little insidiously. We had liked him pretty well. "A trifle mawkish," Wash observed. "But he seems a good fellow at bottom."

Kit made no reply to this.

"How do *you* like him?" I ventured after a moment's silence.

"Oh! *I* like him well enough," said Kit, and changed the subject.



CHAPTER III.

The Hounds, "Jim," "Nance," and "Ginx," with Some Account of Each. — The "Fox-Bait." — "Whoa, ye kicking old Rep!" — A Four-dollar Horse.

WE slept soundly, — rather too soundly; and were only up in time for breakfast, and the "family prayers" which followed the meal. ("Grandfather's" prayer was fully as prolix as on a former and less decorous occasion.)

Mr. Graves joined in these devotional exercises; but he grew sadly uneasy ere the prayer concluded. I detected him in a surreptitious consultation of his watch. It lacked but fourteen minutes of nine! and he immediately hurried off to school with the girls.

We went out to the stable to see the hounds and the "bait."

"Here they are!" exclaimed Kit, rolling back the stable-door.

He had them chained in empty horse-stalls warmly bedded.

"This is Jim," continued Kit, making us acquainted with a big, bony, savage-looking beast, white, calicoed with light tan. "He's the leader, a half-breed. It's as

much as a man's life's worth to get before him after he has run five or six hours. A while ago I had them on a fox-track. They ran till night around a mountain up here. Then the fox, an old 'cross gray,' made a bee-line for another mountain about four miles farther on. I found they weren't gaining, for it was bad running; and so cut across to take them off the trail. Jim had got pretty mad. His eyes were like coals. I knew I should have my hands full: so I hacked down a lot of little hemlocks, and threw them in on to the track at a place where it ran between a couple of big rocks. Then I got a large, brushy hemlock-limb, and stood ready on the other side. Up came Jim. I yelled at him. Paid no attention to me. I thought he would have to go round the hemlock; but he took it at a leap, when he found the scent was under it. As he came over, I laid on to him with the limb. I had to fairly knock him down, and kick him after he was down, to stop him. He would have throttled me in a jiffy if I hadn't got him down and got the better of him. He was so excited, he didn't know me. Afterwards he acted as ashamed as you please. The other two were a little behind, and stopped when they found Jim had stopped. But I made up my mind that it was a rather risky business. I think Jim has something of the bloodhound in him. I bought him in one of the adjoining towns to the east of us.

"And this," continued Kit, going to the next stall, "is *old Nance*. She runs next to Jim. Is a faster runner than Jim; but he won't have any thing ahead of him of the feminine gender. When I want some sharp, quick running, I put her on alone. She knows what I

want just as well as I could say it in words. She will skim like a swallow; and she will put a common yellow fox *into the ground* in from one to three hours, or else overhaul him handsomely. Generally holes them. They'll take the ground when they hear her closing up behind. You shall see. I don't care what folks say about fox-hunting: it's fun alive, I think."

I cannot describe old Nance more graphically than by saying that she resembled a large-sized English coach-dog: only the black spots were rather larger, and less regularly disposed. She had, of course, a hound's ear, with a lean, bony head, and a prodigious muzzle.

"And this," resumed Kit, going round into the third stall, — "this is Ginx." (I think Kit must have been reading "Ginx's Baby.") "One year old. Runs behind the other two. Going to be quite a hound one of these days. Nothing but a puppy yet. Got a good eye and a good head: intelligent brute."

Ginx — we could but grin at the name — was a sleek, short-haired creature; black back, with tan legs, red ears, and light tan nose.

"But what of this one?" demanded Wash, looking into a fourth stall, where a faintly-brindled and rather ill-conditioned hound stood shivering.

"Oh! he's of no account," said Kit. "Not one of my pack: wouldn't keep such a cur. You see, he belonged to an old chap a few miles from here: so I bought him up about a fortnight ago. Gave a fiver for him too; and he isn't worth a paper dime. But I was afraid the fellow would be out hunting with him, chasing and frightening off the foxes: so I gave him his

price. There isn't now another fox-hound kept within a dozen miles of here; and there hasn't been a hound out this season yet. The foxes are as bold as crows. Go out almost any evening after dark, and you can hear them *mousing* round the stone-piles out in the fields; and, just as day is breaking, they sometimes get to barking and yelping in a perfect chorus. There are scores of them about here. But what to do with this hound I have bought, I really don't know; unless I take him for fox-bait."

"Why, is this the bait you've been chaffing us about?" demanded Wash.

"No! oh, no!" disclaimed Kit. "Come on: I'll show you the bait."

He went out through a passage leading from the stable into the barn proper, and, partly opening the door of a dark pen adjoining the haymow, peeped cautiously in. Our curiosity was now highly excited.

"In there, is it?" said I.

"In there," said Kit. "Take a peep?"

Impressed by his own seeming caution, I carefully craned my neck, and was just getting my face in at the dark crack of the door, when, quick as a wink, there was a snort, a swish of something or other, instantly followed by a ponderous crash against the door, which, slamming to, knocked me most unceremoniously into the middle of the barn-floor.

"What the dickens!" exclaimed Wash; while Wade made a bolt of several yards.

Kit sprang to secure the door, shouting, "Whoa!

you confounded, kicking old rep! Whoa! or I'll have ye shot and skinned!"

At the same moment, a horse's head was thrust menacingly out at a place where a board had fallen off the partition of the pen, — an ugly, lean white head, with retroverted ears, and horrid yellow teeth all exposed. The old brute's eye showed wickedly white and vicious.

Kit seized a rake, and bestowed it upon the unsightly apparition with a hearty malediction.

"Is that your fox-bait?" cried Wade, coming back a little.

We began to laugh.

"That's the bait," said Kit with a grin.

"Well, by Jude!" says Wash, "if you don't mind him, he will be making fox-bait of you instead."

"You would have thought so, I guess, if you had seen the tussle we had to get him into the pen when I first bought him, a week ago," laughed Kit.

"Oh! then he isn't one of your raising?" Wade observed.

"Not at all!" cried Kit. "I got him of a notorious old character who lives about a mile from here. The animal is worthless: has the *heaves*, and about as many spavins as legs. And he seems to have brought along his old master's disposition with him. Kicks outrageously, and bites like a dragon. Years of abuse have sunk him to a veritable devil. But he will make a pile of fox-bait."

We could but laugh.

"Seems to me you are rather extravagant," said I, "to kill horses for fox-bait."

"Not a bit of it!" replied Kit.

"How much did he cost?" Wash asked.

"*Four dollars!*"

CHAPTER IV.

Chilly Weather. — The Frozen Lake. — Skating. — “The Fire-Eater on Skates.” — A Trip to the “Store.” — Roundwood Berries. — Robins. — We visit Mr. Graves’s School. — Some Pretty School-Girls. — The Pearl of the Schoolroom. — The Class in English Analysis. — Introductions. — Miss Kate Edwards. — The Pretty Misses Wilbur. — Wash as a Ladies’ Man.

THE forenoon was a pleasant one; though the wind blew chill enough from the north-west. The ground was frozen hard. Off to the east of the farm lay the pond, under a glass-bright expanse of new ice. Our hearts bounded free at sight of it.

“What’s to hinder skating?” Wash exclaimed.

“Nothing,” said Kit quietly; “and this evening, if it’s not too windy, we will have the girls out. There’s a moon this week.”

Both Wash and myself had brought our skates, thinking they might very likely come into requisition. But Wade had never skated a yard in his life; had never learned how. South-Carolinians rarely get a chance to practise this grand old Northern sport. Wade looked doubtful when the skating-project was proposed.

“Oh! we can teach you in an hour or two,” said Kit encouragingly.

“Can you, though?” asked Wade.

Time has been when our Southern friend would have scorned to learn a so purely Northern accomplishment; but, the more he sees of the North and the world in general, the less prominent grow his local prejudices. He is gradually — thanks to our yachting scheme — becoming that most desirable of comrades, — a true man of the world. Travel, and travel only, can do it. Travel gives one breadth of thought, and charity for his fellow-man. Your true man of the world is always charitable; capable of seeing the *good*, and choosing it anywhere and everywhere.

Our yacht-cruises confirm me in this belief. No method of education can possibly be so beneficial as that which takes a young man (or a young lady) understandingly over the world.

Thousands of our American youth are wealthy enough to do as we are doing; yet they settle down to three years of high-school and four years of college life in some dull little town, and at last *graduate* as *green* as grass of real life, of men, and of the great world around them, their heads stuffed with a mass of dry Latin and unintelligible theorems of geometry. Ah, what a mistake! Even at the risk of being called opinionated, I will write, DON'T DO IT. You can take the same money, and do far better. Two thousand dollars, economically expended, will now take you over nearly the whole world. And, even if a fellow hasn't a dime to bless himself with, he has no need to *plant* himself like a hill of potatoes.

Get right up and get. Strike off somewhere. Correspond for some newspaper; take an agency for some new publication; or, if nothing better offers, sell "corn-salve" at twenty-five cents per roll (but first be sure it is a good article, and will cure 'em). By the time you have done this six months, you will see your way out to something better, — if you are a genuine *live* Yankee youth, and go abroad with your eyes open.

Opportunities for making a fortune are lying about under our very noses, if we can only get our eyes open enough to see them. The sort of capital most needed is spunk, force, grit, seasoned by perseverance.

We went down to the pond-shore with our skates. Kit had brought out a pair of lady's skates — the property of Miss Nell — for Wade to make his maiden efforts on. They were rather small for him; but we finally got his feet into them, and *stood him up*. It took some minutes to get explained to him that he must turn his foot out after each slide ahead, in order to get a second foothold, and not slide backwards. At length he said he had the *idea*. We stood aside; and he struck off gallantly under a prodigious head of muscle. He went eight or ten rods like a dart; then fell all at once with a stomach-shaking wallop. We hurried up. He had fairly knocked his wind out, and was gasping to catch it. Got him on his feet presently; and he "came to time" again. We all gave him lots of advice. The only difficulty was to follow it.

"Don't drive ahead so, like a mad bull in a china-shop!" admonished Wash. "Slower; more deliberate like; so" (illustrating it).

Wade listened attentively. I knew he wanted to make a good appearance the coming evening, and was giving his wits to it *sharp*. He made a second essay, — a slow one, — and tumbled immediately; then he sat still a long while (taking counsel of himself, I presume) while we three took a turn across the pond.

By and by, looking round, I saw him afoot again, and going like a streak up the pond near the shore.

“He’ll break his neck!” exclaimed Wash. “Never saw a fellow plunge ahead so!”

But he didn’t lose his legs, and went on for a quarter of a mile in a marvellously short time: then, attempting to turn on a much too sharp curve, he went down again, — slap! I feared that he had killed himself outright. Kit shouted lustily. At that he sat up, and waved his hand, but continued sitting there for as much as fifteen minutes. A while after, we espied him on his feet again, tearing down toward us like a July tornado. We instinctively got out of the way; and he went past at a regular 2.40 pace, his arms stuck out, and brandished. Kit lay down on the ice, and roared with laughter. I never saw a person skate with such downright, unreasonable violence before. On he went, looking neither to right nor left, for nearly a thousand meters, and, mindful of his previous mistake, took nearly the whole width of the pond to turn on, and came back flying.

By this time he was reeking with perspiration, and ready to drop with fatigue. He got to the shore, and dropped panting. But he triumphantly exclaimed *that he had got it now!* And, so far as I have remarked, he

has never had any difficulty in skating since. I never saw a Northern boy learn the art in just that way, nor yet in so brief a time. We have had many a laugh — *inter nos* — over “the fire-eater on skates.”

After dinner, we harnessed one of the horses, — not the fox-bait, — and went off to the “store,” distant a mile and a half, to purchase Wade a pair of skates. The ruts and holes in the road, frozen hard, made the double wagon dance in a most side-shaking way as we bowled along at a smart pace down the descending ground. The afternoon was pleasant; but a dim, misty bank lay along the south-western sky, — a “snow-bank,” in rural phrase; and, as snow was quite essential to our plans for fox-hunting, we observed it with interest.

A part of the way was through a woody tract, where there were hundreds of mountain-ash, or “round-woods,” fairly laden with their bright scarlet berries in countless clusters; and the whole place teemed with thousands of robins feasting on the fruit. Kit informs me that these birds gather here late in the fall every year, and never leave the locality so long as a single cluster of berries remains. Wash suggested robin-pies. But Kit said, that to come shooting here would call down on us the wrath of the whole community. The robin is a sacred bird.

The skates for sale at the “store” were of a rather rough pattern, but strong. Wade purchased two pairs. Kit also negotiated for two or three brown-paper packages, the exact purport of which I did not at the time understand.

As we came back, we passed the schoolhouse, — a mod-

est story-and-a-half structure. Through the window I caught sight of Mr. Graves in the discharge of his duties.

"Let's make him a call!" Wash proposed. "It's three o'clock. We can stop till school is out, and so bring the girls home."

"Well — yes; so we can," assented Kit.

But he had hesitated just for an instant. I should not have urged it, seeing this; but Wade struck in his plea for it: and, without further ado, we rattled round to the door, and, hitching up the horse, smoothed down our faces, and knocked. Forthwith appeared Mr. Graves, book in hand.

"We were passing, and thought we would just drop in a minute," explained Kit.

Mr. Graves was, of course, delighted to have our company. School-teachers are doubtless passionately fond of callers.

We were without delay ushered in, and seated in the "desk," — save Kit, who, as an old scholar here, beat naturally up into the back seat, where were ranged a stalwart row of boys, who eyed us with no great favor, I thought; and, contrasting the rather dashing "get-up" of my two comrades with their rustic mien and dress, I did not much wonder at it. It isn't in human (male) nature to greatly admire a superior, — superior in dress and "style," I mean. The young metropolitan always has this advantage over the country youth. But our companionship with Kit has taught us not to rely far on such advantages; since there rise yearly a class of young men in the country who come to the city, and beat us on our own ground.

Kit had taken a seat beside a young fellow of about his own age seemingly, — an old schoolmate, doubtless; for Kit was playfully turning over his algebra, and holding it up to see how far he had got in it by the soiling of the pages, — a very accurate test. I could but compare them, and wonder what magical power drives one boy on in life ahead of his fellows.

Modesty, of course, had withheld my eyes from wandering immediately over to the other side of the room (it was a large room, and contained some fifty-five or sixty scholars). But modesty, I regret to say, had no such sway over Wash; for, on turning to whisper to him some trifle, I found his attention obstinately fixed on some object on the feminine side. Mustering my courage, I ventured to steal a furtive glance. There was a goodly array of girlhood and young womanhood, the most of which was slyly regarding us out of the corners of its eyes. But I did not, at first, see any thing that would seem likely to have enchained the optics of so practised a connoisseur as our respected fellow-yachter, Mr. Burleigh. I had to come back, and take the *direction* from his eyes again. Mr. Graves was hearing a grammar-lesson. Wash's eyes seemed to pass close to the master's head, and continue on toward the farther corner of the room. Ah, yes! I saw now: a young lady, half hidden by heads, with her face partially shaded by her hand and wrist (for one arm rested easily, as if from habit, on the desk before her), — a white, dusk face; dark-brown hair prettily arranged. By Jove! there was a *pearl*, composedly studying her lessons, not once remarking Wash's admiring glance. Wade had espied

her too. A moment later she changed her book, and incidentally looked up, — a dark-hazel glance from a large, calm eye. Our six guilty eyes scattered *instantly* in all directions. Momentarily I caught a keen, incisive look from Kit, which was gone as quickly; and I remembered afterwards that I did not quite understand nor like it.

If *affairs* are as I afterwards had reason to suspect, I think Kit did very wrong in not giving us some hint thereto: it would have saved one or two heart-aches, I am pretty sure. Of course, it is always very easy telling what a fellow ought to do: still I shall let the above remark stand, though it forestalls the story proper. All I will now say is, that a source of discord — a very old one, I believe, worse than all our political disagreements — disclosed itself that winter, which came near setting us at swords'-points metaphorically, and which might well have dissolved our companionship in good earnest. A word in the first place, even a hint ever so obscure, would have prevented it all. Hence I hold Kit blamable, and am willing to let the reader judge.

Ere we had well regained our ocular equanimity, Mr. Graves called "the class in English analysis." The young fellow with whom Kit was sitting came down to the recitation-seats, Kit accompanying him; also two of the larger girls from the back seat, with some flutter; and then, very quietly but leisurely, the dark-eyed miss out of the corner seat. It seemed as if the whole school were a foil to set off — not her dress; for, if I noticed, she was not richly clad — that certain nameless grace which

dowers the lady born. She did not ignore our presence as company: she did not give it prominence.

Mr. Graves was about to give us his own text-book to look over from; when she, like a dutiful pupil, handed him her own for that purpose, which he passed to us. This surrender was like to have embarrassed the fair benefactor: She had presumably thought to look over with one of the other young ladies; but, on turning to them, it appeared that they had but one book between them *that day*. There was a momentary hesitation. Wade rose to restore the book with an elaborate bow; but our lady disclaimed it with a little wave of her hand and a reserved smile, and, passing along, seated herself demurely beside the young fellow, who graciously, and very much as a matter of course, I thought, gave her half his book. (He was her brother, though.) Imagine a young girl, very beautiful certainly, rather tall, and finely formed, doing all this with an air of perfect ease, and, withal, modesty.

Well, we could but repress our admiration. Something quite new and unexpected seemed to be resulting from our fox-hunting tour. I knew Wash and Wade well enough to predict a thing or two. Indeed, I was satisfied, from the general appearance of Wash, that he was — after his fashion — more than half in love already.

Then I wondered what Mr. Graves thought of his pupil, and laid him under surveillance; but he was on his dignity, and conducted the recitation with all the *methodus* of a full-blown professor. Then I thought of Kit, and was sincerely puzzled. I looked at him attentively. There he sat, to all appearance, interested in

nothing but the lesson; and a very dry one it was. I compared them, as they sat there with only the other young fellow between them,—she with her wealth of dark beauty; he with his strong face, and smart, assertive look. I am not ashamed to say that I watched them narrowly; and I know Wash and Wade did: but we neither of us discerned the slightest indication or sign of any thing in common between them. Furthermore, I bethought myself, that, for the past three years, I had never known of Kit's having a lady-love. He had never, while absent from Maine, written to nor received letters from a lady. In short, I had never heard of his doing any thing in the "sparking line;" and he had always argued that no young man should dream of marriage till well established in business. I concluded that he and she were schoolmates, perhaps; nothing more. I think Wade and Wash had the same idea. I do not know how this conclusion affected them; but, for my own part, I felt much relieved by it,—on their account, of course. There would be no *teterrima causa belli* (as the Freshman would say) between them. I was more occupied with these reflections than with the English-analysis lesson.

The exercise finished, Mr. Graves had given some masterly opinions relative to the formation of our mother-tongue, and generally exerted himself to give the class reason to be proud of their teacher. But I still distrusted him; and, when he handed our young lady her book, I detected his glance,—not exactly a tender glance, but one of interrogation. It convinced me that he had put forth his powers before *us* to win *her* admira-

tion; and now he very naturally glanced to inquire whether or not he had succeeded. He had fine talents, and a handsome countenance; in a word, all the elements of an able man in embryo. I saw no reason why she would not like him; though Charles Reade argues that dark eyes are not likely to love the dark-eyed. But that is rank nonsense, so far as my observation goes.

Question. — Could Wash oust the Freshman? Could Wade? I rather hoped he would, if he could by fair play; for schoolmasters have no sort of business to fall in love with their lady-pupils. It always demoralizes the school, and makes a “mess” of things generally. It was not very wonderful, however, that he had done so, or was in a fair way to. If I were a schoolmaster, I should not want this beautiful girl for a pupil. I think I would forthwith resign, and enter some other calling less amenable to public censure.

But suppose one or the other of my comrades should succeed in dislodging the Freshman. Suppose Wade should. How about Wash? Would he submit with a good grace? Would he quietly stand aside? Our friendship was a firm one. I did not believe any member of our party would be so foolish as to let any thing of this sort divide us. But beauty has often set bosom-friends and comrades at daggers’-points. Having the good of our party and our future plans at heart, I felt a little uneasy, and secretly resolved to watch sharp, and be ready to pour on the oil of disinterested mediation. It would be a shame to have labored and planned such great things only to have our party broken up by—even a beautiful girl. Nothing else would part us, I felt sure.

A class or two in spelling; then school was dismissed. Kit came down to the desk, and with him the young fellow with whom he had been sitting, and whom he at once introduced, — “Mr. *Tom Edwards*,” a well-made, frank-faced youth, rather above middle size, and, as we afterwards found, intelligent. I remarked his strong chin and rather heavy black eyebrows.

Two very pretty girls who had just donned their cloaks were standing for a moment by the stove, — Miss Georgie and Miss Elsie Wilbur. Mr. Graves introduced us. We chatted a moment. But I suppose Kit must have seen Wash’s eyes wandering toward *that corner seat* where the *pearl* was leisurely muffling herself to face the chill wind out of doors. He slipped out of our circle of conversation, and made his way up the aisle. The pearl was just tying a white-and-buff beaded hood under her chin. There was a moment’s ordinary conversation between them: then she followed him down the aisle; and I was introduced, — “Miss *Kate Edwards*.”

I had felt sure she was a lady at first sight: now I knew it. The worst of it was, I had to immediately give place to Wade, who was waiting his turn to exhibit his black eyes and debonair. Wash, with his usual accursed craft, had got behind us, in order to come last, and so have the field clear, with nobody behind to push him aside. And, once introduced, he struck in on his usual happy-go-lucky style, and managed to get off a droll *bon-mot*, which set everybody laughing at the outset. Miss Edwards smiled bewitchingly either with him or at him. That spurred the young reprobate. His tongue began to wag out a stream of comical nonsense, which set even

Mr. Graves smiling. The rest of us couldn't get in a word edgewise: Wade, indeed, was the only one who tried to. Kit looked quietly on with a queer, amused smile.

I turned to the Misses Wilbur. They were pretty, blue-eyed girls. Surely it was not their fault that Miss Edwards had cast them in eclipse. And, come to look at them, Miss Elsie was really beautiful, though rather delicate, looking as if (like so many of our girls) the New-England winter might be too severe for so frail a flower. She was modestly embarrassed in conversation with a stranger at first. It took but a few judicious words to give her a start, however, especially after Miss Nell and Miss Wealthy joined us. We had a pleasant, cosey chat, somewhat buffeted by the bursts of laughter from the larger group, of which Wash was "jaw-master" (to use a yachting term). I was not surprised to see that he had, to a great extent, monopolized Miss Edwards's attention. I had expected as much. *Question.*—Would he be able to do so after the first week? Mr. Graves appeared guardedly uneasy; and, either at that or something else, Kit seemed altogether amused.

As Miss Nell and Miss Wealthy were to ride, Wash and Wade magnanimously offered to walk up. Just how magnanimous an offer this was appears in the fact that Miss Edwards's way home lay over a part of the same route.

Looking back as we drove away, we could see them coming, — Wash in close company with the lady, Wade at his side, and Mr. Graves a little behind with Tom and Miss Kate's younger sister Rhoda. Miss Nell looked

back at them ; then glanced to Kit, and then to me curiously. Kit laughed heartily, and said Wash was evidently suffering from one of his constitutional relapses ; then went on to say that he had invited all hands to a skating-party that evening. That changed the subject.

It was dusk when Wash and Wade came in ; for indeed it had been past sunset before we left the school-house. Wash was in high spirits. Wade was humming "Dixie" abstractedly.

CHAPTER V.

The Ball on the Ice. — The Beacon-Fires. — The Supper-Table. — Some Stunning Toilets. — Wash Refulgent. — Wade "Refulgenter." — Miss "Jule." — Some Rapid Skating. — A Grand Rink. — A Promenade with Miss Kate. — The "Poetry of Motion." — The Hemlock-Top. — A Partridge. — A Fox. — What a Pretty Girl thought of Wash. — A Race. — Wash grows Audacious. — A Chat with Miss Nell. — Going Home with Jule. — The "Ten-year-old." — Rather a Joke.

SUPPER was waiting. We hurried it somewhat, to prepare for the ice-party.

As soon as it was finished, Wash and Wade betook themselves up stairs to "fix" for the evening.

"Look out for some stunning toilets!" Kit whispered to me. "But, Raed, I must rely on you to help me a little on the arrangements. Two such *old bachelors* as you and I are not to be making fools of ourselves, you know."

The responsibilities of oversight clearly devolved on us. Assisted by the hired man, we carried down to the shore of the lake a couple of pine-boards about a foot in width, and twelve feet long; also a couple of benches. These were to serve as a table for the collation.

The place chosen for our festive headquarters was a point directly under a high knoll crowned with dark firs, about a hundred rods up the shore of the pond from the boat-landing. There was a moon; but the snow-bank had risen steadily, and well-nigh darkened it. The sky had a dull-gray tint. It was not dark exactly, but wonderfully dim and indistinct, — one of those evenings when it is impossible to trust the eye in proportion to the seeming light.

The table was set on the ice, a few yards from the shore. On the knoll, ten or fifteen feet above the table, were two or three great pitch-pine stumps. One of these Kit had the man set on fire. It burned with a steady, ruddy glare, lighting up the whole place like some huge lamp.

Half a mile farther up the lake, and off a hundred rods from the shore, was a little islet, or rather a large rock, with a few bushes on it, rising abruptly from the water. On this Kit had a second fire kindled; and a third against a stump on the opposite shore, which blazed up very brightly.

The general position was thus outlined by the fires. Moreover, an abundance of "touch-wood" splinters, four and five feet long, were provided to be used as torches by those who wished them. The refreshments consisted of a two-gallon stone jug of the redoubtable sweet cider, with a half-score of glasses, which were arranged along one end of the table. Then there were two willow-baskets containing "box-raisins," together with crackers and "seed-cakes" by the platterful, — quite a spread.

These preliminaries were scarcely completed ere the

sounds of gayety came borne from the highway at a distance; and soon a merry party issued from the darkness, and approached the fire-lit table.

"My eye!" whispered Kit behind his hand. "Only look at the two swells! Poor Graves is nowhere!"

Wash was refulgent in his heavy beaver overcoat trimmed with black Astrachan, heavy fur gauntlets, black pants, a tall, peaked Astrachan cap, and a gorgeous crimson neck-scarf, amid the shining folds of which sparkled a (not very large) diamond.

But Wade was refulgenter; in fact, absolutely stunning, — a pure white lambskin cap fully as tall as Wash's; a very light-colored wolfskin-overcoat, the breast of which disclosed a pink muffler crossed within, and only showing a glimpse of his collar and the single gold button which fastened it; light pants to correspond with coat; and heavy buff gloves. This costume set off his black eyes, and clear, dark complexion, to the utmost. I thought of the black and white knights.

Wade was fortunate in the selection of his colors too; for Miss Kate wore a sack of white fur (or was it a cloak? I am ashore on the great female wardrobe), with a white tippet, and a white plume in her skating-hat. But the other girls all wore black Astrachan sacks. It was the great Astrachan season of 1870.

Ah! 'twas a jolly, goodly sight to see, — the sparkling eyes, the red cheeks, crowding in full of life, health, and jollity. Miss Georgie and Miss Elsie Wilbur had come; also a Miss Julia Sylvester, whom I had seen at the schoolhouse, but had not yet received an introduction to, — a fair-faced girl, but rather athletic and easy-going.

Kit lost no time in making me known to "Jule," who, he assured me (before her), was the best skater on the ice.

But they were all skaters, thanks to the yearly practice the lake had given them.

Tom Edwards was there, also a ten-year-old brother of Miss Sylvester. There were several independent skaters, too, not exactly included with our own party.

Wash, with a burst of volubility, carried all before him, and paired off with Miss Edwards. I fancied Wade's slight acquaintance with the art of skating made him a trifle diffident at first. Skates were bound on; silence during the process of buckling settling for a few moments, only to be succeeded by a fresh burst of mirth when the straps were achieved. Wash had gallantly set us the example of adjusting his partner's skates.

Then up and off, all hands two and two; the ten-year-old flitting ahead with a blazing splint like a furious Jack-o'-lantern.

In this novel promenade the couples *held hands*, leaning lightly apart. Kit had the pretty Elsie. Mr. Graves attached himself to her sister Georgie. Young Edwards held the hand of Miss Wealthy. Wade confided his gorgeous inexperience to the hand of Miss Nell. For my own part, I found Jule all Kit had recommended, — on ice; and had no small ado to keep her in hand at all, as we dashed on at a ringing swing, soon distancing the others. The girl skated astonishingly fast. Indeed, I have never seen better skaters than these school-girls; and that night there was no fatiguing wind to tug and drag at their skirts.

Our first burst was up around the fire on the islet rock, and back (one mile).

Think of this, ye cramped-up doublers on the rinks ! Fancy a dark-gleaming, forest-bordered rink of ten square miles, — room to put out all one's strength, and never a turn ! Consider our ice-party a ball, and this our well-waxed floor, along which the red gleam of the fires shines in a long, ever-shifting streak. Beneath us are forty feet of still, cold, black water. The impression is one of vast space and ample bounds. A spell enchants it all, and illusion flits about it. The wild light of the fire on that hoary, wave-washed rock transforms us each from each as we cut swiftly around it, and, circling off, dart away with the other fires gleaming far adown the ink-black pavement. Merry laughter sounds faint and low from far off in the dark. The sharp, continuous *cut* of the steel runners dies out as swiftly-receding feet fly past and on. Ah ! this is a ball worth attending : no heats, no sweat and reek. The pure, keen air baptizes the dancer. The lake sleeps underneath. Far around, the forest glooms and lowers in darkness ; and we vainly speculate as to the savage eyes that watch us from out its depths.

Owing to difference of relative speed, our party was soon dispersed over the dim expanse in couples, of which Jule and myself were the first to arrive at the table. But a merry peal of laughter close behind forbade us to greatly boast. Wash and Miss Kate were but a few seconds in our wake. They came flying out of the dimness, and gliding into the circle of light. Was it a nymph from the lake's depths ? Surely I might be

pardoned the thought; for I saw the most beautiful object in creation, — a peerless American girl, glorified by a grand effort of physical exercise in a keen, bracing air. Why shouldn't Wash look perfectly happy? He did. He would not have been human, nor yet the man I take him for, if he hadn't.

And even Miss Julia, with her masses of yellow hair and rather athletic figure, might easily have been mistaken for a goddess, so exhilarating had been the effort.

A sip of cider, that sweet cider, if you please. Certainly. But to decant cider from a two-gallon jug *on skates* is something of a feat: done, however, by a sharp brace at the muscles.

And by this time the others come in; Kit the very last of all. It gave me a still higher opinion of him to perceive that he had not allowed the delicate Elsie to over-exert herself. Would any but a lover have been so thoughtful? Why not anybody of sense? Still it was suggestive; and, in the uncertainty in which Kit had contrived to leave us all, I caught at it for a while.

Miss Nell seemed vastly amused about something or other; and Wade looked a little discomposed. Possibly he had tumbled down. It would not have been surprising, — his first day on the ice.

We sipped cider, got breath, and ate a handful of raisins.

Kit advised following up the shore in the shadow of the forest this next "heat;" each couple as far as they chose. Time not to exceed twenty minutes from the table.

"And now all ready!" he cried. "Change partners!"

Wash looked distressed, and would fain have resisted; but all moved to change. There was no help for it. Miss Kate had been standing next me; and I instantly offered to be Wash's successor. Wade cast a single hopeless glance, but was fortunate enough to secure Miss Elsie. Kit paired off for a race with Jule.

Away again! I didn't look to see; but I thought Wash had Miss Nell.

Jule's skating had surprised me: equally did Miss Kate's charm me. I had somewhere read into a vein of nonsense about the "poetry of motion." It recurred as I held her hand. I felt it pervade and confirm my own exertions. We came to move in perfect time, as sound waves chord, and the fierce solar thrills blend their spectrum in the white light of day. One, two, three hundred yards. A glow of healthful ecstasy began to thrill and intensify. It was mutual too; for, quite involuntarily, we both exclaimed at once, "How delightful!" then laughed (still in chord) at our unity of impulse.

We were skating swiftly, and had distanced them all save Kit and Jule, who were on a regular "breakneck" far ahead.

The dark old forest threw its shadows far out over us; for we were keeping within a few rods of the shore. I remember avouching in glowing phrase that I had never before known what happiness might come from physical exercise; and Miss Kate declared to a fully concurring listener, that, of all physical exercise, skating, within proper bounds, was the most congenial to young people generally.

"Ah, this old lake of ours!" she exclaimed: "I love it dearly. So many pleasant hours here! In summer, as well as in winter, it is always a well-spring of excursion. Such grand *sails* as we have here in the summer among these islands, and along the wooded shores in the shade of the great trees! Ah, Mr. Raedway! this beautiful lake will be the dearest memory of my life, if ever I should leave this pleasant home neighborhood."

I wondered whether she loved it so passionately for its own sake, or from happy incidents connected with it; and hastened to say how much it had fascinated me two years ago and over, when we had passed up to the head of it in a row-boat on our Katahdin trip, which Kit has so graphically recorded in "Camping Out."

"Yes: Kit and Nell have told me of your being here then. I was at Westbrook that summer. How fortunate you were in finding that graphite mine!"

"But we had a rough experience," I could not help remarking.

"It reads pleasantly," said Miss Kate, laughing.

"Kit put the smooth side out in the story: that's his way," I added. "He never dwells on disagreeables."

"Do you think so?" she asked reflectively. "But how singular that you four should join together, and adopt such a curious mode of educating yourselves! I never heard any thing like it. It is intensely original."

"But what do you really think of it, anyway, Miss Edwards?" I questioned.

"It would take a deal of worldly wisdom to give such an opinion as you seek," she replied lightly: "I would

not dare. But I like the thought of it. It is romantic. Did it never occur to you that your scheme was very romantic?"

"Quixotic, perhaps you would say," I added, hurt a little, if I must own it, at the thought.

"No; not Quixotic," rejoined Miss Kate candidly. "I never thought that, at least. But, now I think of it, I can imagine that it might become so, were you to allow it to *degenerate* on your hands."

"That is just what we shall never allow it to do!" I exclaimed rather too warmly. "Our motto is, hard study and world-wide travel combined."

"In that light I admire your scheme," said Miss Kate. "And I want to ask you a question. Shall I?"

"Assuredly."

"Well, then — Excuse me, Mr. Raedway; but would it — do you think it would be possible for a party of *girls* to adopt your plan?"

I declare I was a trifle staggered for a moment.

"I'm afraid you deem the question unladylike," said Miss Kate quickly, and with a movement which broke the rhythm of our forward motion.

"Not a bit!" I cried, with a lunge to regain it. "I thought only of the difficulties you would have to encounter."

"Would there really be any thing *impossible* in the way of it, in your opinion?"

I was frank enough to confess, that to go about on a yacht as we had done, while it might not be exactly impossible, would, I feared, be well-nigh impracticable, for girls.

"Ah, you judge girls by the little they actually accomplish nowadays!" exclaimed Miss Kate. "That's hardly fair. We *could* do better, with opportunity,—a fair chance with you young gentlemen. Once free from old-time restraints, we would show you that even a yacht would not be out of our range. But I think it likely," she added, "that it would be hardly feasible to adopt your plan entire. Yet, with some limitations, I do not see why a party of girls might not enjoy the advantages of travel equally with a party of young gentlemen. You complain of the *dull vegetable life* at a college; but let me tell you that the sort of life at a female seminary or boarding-school is ten times worse,—duller."

I had little doubt of it. At the same time, I was not a little surprised to hear such *hard sense* from a beautiful girl of seventeen,—possibly not more than sixteen. How had she come by it? A thought popped into my mind.

"You must be quite well acquainted with Kit, I suppose," I said.

Miss Kate was silent a moment. Perhaps she did not find me coherent.

"Oh, yes!" she said. "He is a near neighbor of ours, you know. I have always known him; and we have often spoken on these subjects," she continued. "But do you not think he indulges in some very radical opinions,—on educational matters, for instance?"

"Not a whit too radical," I said.

"I knew you four believed very much alike," replied Miss Kate. "Now, Mr. Graves thinks far differently."

I had no doubt he did.

"And he is a very sensible young man," continued my fair companion. "As a teacher, I like him very much. He is a fine scholar. In algebra and analysis, I make better progress under him than I did under our professor at the seminary. And in Latin too, so far as I can know, he is very correct."

I was foolish enough to say that her good opinion must be very pleasing to Mr. Graves.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Miss Kate. "I'm afraid you 'young yachters' are all alike. Do you know your friend Mr. Burleigh is fearfully prone to compliment and to flatter?"

I was not surprised to hear so from such fair authority.

Just ahead of us, a large hemlock had fallen out upon the ice recently.

"Why, where are we?" said Kate, glancing about. "We have come a long way. See! the fire on the upper rock is far below us! We must have come fully a mile. Have you heard Kit and Julia pass us?"

I had not. I thought they had gone farther up the lake. We listened, but could hear nothing of them.

"We might wait here for them by the tree-top," I suggested.

"Well, let's," said Miss Kate.

Still holding hands, we glided up to the dark top, and got a jolly start: for a partridge had been quietly sitting in it, and, as we touched the boughs, flew off with a sudden whirr and flutter; at which a fox barked with a prolonged yelp at a little distance in the woods.

Steadying ourselves by the projecting limbs, we got seats on the trunk among the boughs. Save the wild sounds just alluded to, the old woods were profoundly quiet, — quiet as the great dormant lake beneath us.

"Prone to flatter, is he?" I queried, referring to what she had said of Wash. "But how do you like him?"

"Oh! he's a merry fellow. He makes one laugh continuously."

"That's his religion," said I. "He is devoted to fun."

"With ladies, you should have added," laughed Miss Kate. "But I shall like him, I know," she resumed. "It's easy as need be conversing with him. He does his best to please and amuse one; and he doesn't care for what you say, so long as he keeps you laughing."

I could not deny that this was Wash all over.

"But I don't much like the way he treats young ladies," continued Miss Kate after a moment's silence.

"Why?" I demanded, secretly wondering what breach of propriety my urbane young comrade had been guilty of. "I hope he has not offended you."

"Oh, no, indeed! But he treats a young lady as if she were a thing to be amused and put in a good humor merely. He defers every thing to her opinion. If she were little goose enough to take the moon for the 'green cheese,' he never would set her right: he would admit it was cheese, and playfully remark his own stupidity in not finding it out before."

She said this with such inimitable pleasantry, that I was admirably amused.

"Of course, this is all very polite and deferential," Miss Kate resumed, after laughing a little herself. "It's a sort of flattery; and yet, come to sum it up, it is quite the reverse of flattery."

"Why so?" said I, beginning to get curious, and wishing to have her opinion on a very popular line of social polity among young gentlemen of my acquaintance.

"Does Mr. Burleigh defer always to your opinion, or Kit's, or Mr. Additon's?" inquired my fair partner.

I was feign to reply that he was not remarkably apt to.

"Values his own opinion with you as much as anybody, doesn't he?"

I could recall no instance of self-abnegation on Wash's part with which to combat this shrewd suggestion.

"That's because he looks upon you as his equal," said Miss Kate; "and it's because he looks upon *our* opinions as of little or no value that he is so very ready to defer to them. It's just as I said a minute ago. With all his gay politeness, he really treats a young lady as his inferior. Now, I don't like that. It's a very poor quality of flattery, after all: is it not so?"

"But perhaps," said I, "he defers because he considers you more than his equal, — his superior, say."

"I don't believe that!" cried Miss Kate flatly. "It's not much like you young gentlemen. Come, now, you don't believe it yourself! Confess!"

To tell the truth, I had not sufficient hardihood to re-affirm the proposition. But I struck out a new defence for Wash.

"All young ladies are not like you, Miss Edwards," I said. "Those of our acquaintance in the city, with few exceptions, would not much thank us for opposing their ideas. We are expected to defer, and so get a habit of doing so. That's Wash's case. Besides, Miss Edwards, it is not so easy opposing a beautiful young lady. It takes more moral courage than the most of us possess. We are too anxious to please."

"Oh, what a ridiculous way of putting things! What moral cowards you are, to be sure! So the fault is all *ours*, after all!—But hark! There they come! Let's give them a *start*!"

A hundred yards above, the steely ring of skates echoed sharply from the frozen forest-boughs. The next instant, Kit and Jule swept past like shadows. I whistled shrilly; and we caught a momentary glimpse of their faces turned to the sound.

"Now for a race!" cried Miss Kate.

A second more, and we were in hot pursuit. The dark trees on the shore flew past. The cold air poured into our faces, and streamed past our tingling ears. Getting step exactly, Miss Kate took my arm. Then we went even faster, and, having the advantages of our rest at the hemlock-top, came to the table but a few yards behind Kit. It had been a jolly chase. We all panted.

The others had arrived before us. They had not gone up so far. Miss Wealthy had slightly sprained her ankle. Mr. Graves had burst the strap off one of his skates, and was glad of the loan of Wade's second pair.

Kit and Jule had gone up and around the "second island," distant from the table nearly a mile and three-quarters. No wonder they panted.

More refreshments, and a ten-minutes' chat to get rested ; then a second change of partners, which robbed me of the belle, but blessed Wade. They *did* look nicely together, — both in light colors. Wash's envious glances were my only consolation. Misery loves company. I thought it a good thing for his envy to be matched with the rapid Jule. After the race she had given me, I felt a sense of satisfaction in Wash's prospects for the next twenty minutes. That girl must have muscles — somewhere !

Fortune gave me Miss Nell this time ; and, for variety, we skated down the lake.

"How did you succeed with Wade ?" I ventured to ask.

"Oh, splendidly !" But she laughed a good deal.

I could, however, get nothing more definite. No doubt he had sworn her to secrecy as to his tumblings.

"How do you like Kate ?" she inquired.

Having understood, that, in theory, one girl does not care to hear too much of the praises of another girl, I began guardedly to say that I had been *quite well* pleased with her. But I was interrupted.

"Of course you were !" exclaimed Miss Nell warmly. "Isn't she nice ! . . . Oh, you need not hesitate to say so ! We are all used to seeing Kate the belle. But she is not a bit proud : she is just the dearest girl ! And, Mr. Raed, I do believe (very confidentially) that your friend Wash is — very much struck with her !"

Unquestionably it *did* look like that.

"You and Miss Kate are great friends, I suppose," said I. "Has she always lived in this neighborhood ?"

"Her folks have; but Kate has been away to school considerably. She has had very good advantages for a country-girl. Kate is a fine scholar."

"I presume Kit and Miss Kate are very good friends; aren't they?" I queried.

"What makes you *presume* so?" asked Nell a little curiously.

"Oh, nothing! I merely guessed. . . . But aren't they?"

"Well, that's more than I know," replied Nell. "We did use to think, four or five years ago, that they were *rather* good friends; and I never knew of their quarrelling. But, since that time, there has never been any thing to indicate that Kit thinks more of Kate than of Elsie or Jule Sylvester. Did he never say any thing to you?"

"Never a word. Gentlemen, you know, are not apt to tell each other of their sweethearts."

"Aren't they, though?" said Nell. "Why not, I wonder?"

"Well, I'm afraid it is because they are always too distrustful of each other. They are not confidential, like ladies."

"Oh! you think lady-friends are always confidantes, I suppose."

I certainly had some such idea.

"Well, then, they aren't once in a dozen times. Kate is one of my very best friends; but I never should find out a word from her. I *did* ask her once, though," continued Nell, laughing. "She said, 'Why, Nell, what a question! Kit and I hardly speak with each other.'"

"If they were lovers, I guess you would see signs of it," I observed.

Nell thought so too; while I went on to state with philosophical facetiousness that *love* was the most difficult of all secrets to keep. "There's Mr. Graves," said I: "it's as plain as day that he is greatly interested in Miss Kate."

"Well, that's just what I've told Elsie Wilbur," said Nell; "and I've said so to Kate too."

"What did she say to that?" I questioned.

"She only laughed, and then looked serious a moment."

"Would she care for Graves, do you suppose?"

"Well, no: I don't hardly believe she would. But she likes him very much as a teacher; and he *is* a good teacher. Yet one wouldn't always want to go to school, you know," with a queer laugh.

"No more they would!"

Wade and Miss Kate glided past us. A fragment of talk came to my ear. He was telling her of the South and boyhood-days at home. I felt sure he would entertain her.

"Isn't he tall and nice-looking?" exclaimed Nell. "Both in white too!"

Wash and Jule tore by like a brace of arrows.

"*She* is swift enough for him!" I observed.

"That she is!" laughed Nell. "Such a romp of a girl! We had a race a few days before you came down. Jule out-skated all the girls; and all the fellows too, except Kit. I was so pleased to see her skate *by* Mr. Graves! He was real provoked about it too. Hurt his mightiness's feelings to have a girl — one of his scholars —

out-skate him. I told Jule she would get a black mark for that. And, really, he doesn't seem to like her a bit; though I do not suppose that is the cause. I think he considers her too forward and unladylike."

After another rest at the table, a fourth promenade was taken across to the opposite shore.

Wash had made an audacious attempt to secure Miss Kate for his partner; but Mr. Graves, who was at hand when Wade came in with her, bore her away in triumph: and, as it seemed to be an *understood* thing that Miss Kate was to skate with each of the young gentlemen, I wasn't sorry to see it go so. Monopolies are always hateful. Miss Kate seemed to have elected this way in her own mind; and, by way of carrying it out, skated a short turn with Kit on coming back with the Freshman.

By this time it was half-past nine; and we were all more or less fatigued with the exercise. Wash was at Miss Kate's side to propose another turn; but the company voted we had had enough for one night. A parting glass of cider was taken; skates were unbound; and we wended our way up through the pasture to the road. Here Wash further distinguished himself by offering to escort Miss Edwards to her home; though she had a brother present abundantly able to have performed that office. His company was laughingly accepted.

Mr. Tom then took the sisters Wilbur in charge. That left Jule unprovided for.

Wade and Mr. Graves had already turned away, *pouting*, with Miss Nell and Miss Wealthy (I speak it to their shame). Kit stood regarding me a little doubt-

fully, — to see what my intentions were regarding Jule, probably. That illustrious young lady evidently expected something of us. The ten-year-old brother had mysteriously disappeared. I at once offered myself, but fancied I detected a certain mirthful expression on Kit's visage, the incentive to which was presently apparent to me. The young lady's residence was rather over a mile away! The highway thitherward had not been subjected to modern improvements; and the recent hard frosts had somewhat aggravated its topographical features. Yet I am bound to say that the *going-out* was amusing, and at times gay. Among its pleasing items was the unexpected turning-up of the missing ten-year-old from a ditch beside the road, after we had gone about a hundred yards, and his gravely assuring me, that, had I not felt it incumbent upon me to do the honorable thing by Jule, he should have "stood by" her all the same. That was gratifying, at least.

But the *coming-back* was an iron reality which no pen can soften. It was half-past ten ere I had accomplished the round trip.

On entering the sitting-room, I noted that everybody seemed to have fallen into pleasant veins of thought; and Kit at length felt that he owed me a public testimonial of his thankfulness for having relieved him of a somewhat onerous discharge of duty. There were also certain local inquiries as to the condition of the ways "out along."

Ah, well! there are some things to be grinned at and borne.

CHAPTER VI.

Snow. — Wash Ungrateful ; Wade Regretful. — Ho for Fox-Hunting ! — A Dull Day. — A New Project on Foot. — A New Sort of Latin Lesson.

Snow came at last, a wintry blast,
And piled the drifts up high :
In a single night a robe of white
Dropped down from out the sky.

THE next morning it was snowing thickly : the very thing we had been so eagerly anticipating for our fox-hunting. Forest, field, and lake lay strangely white ; and every bush and every stump was crowned with blinding wreaths. It seemed hardly like the same landscape.

When I woke, Wash was up, gazing ruefully out of the window.

"It has buried the ice," said he in funereal accents. "It will spoil the skating !"

"But the fox-hunting," I suggested cheerily.

"Fox-hunting be hanged !" quoth he. "Raed, it will be a long day before we shall have another so gay a time as we had last night. Wasn't it *magnificent* ? 'Shall we ever be as gay if we skate again ?' to quote Miss Larcom with a slight alteration."

"Ware the little bare god with the picked arrow, Wash," said I warningly.

"Nonsense!" said he. "But, seriously, I wish this confounded snow had delayed a week longer."

I begged to observe that I should think Providence would get sick at heart answering some folks' prayers, since the snow was the very thing we had all been longing for.

"Ah! but that was before I saw — the *ice*," replied this grateful boy.

Wade came into our room.

"Whew!" he exclaimed, glancing out the window with a shudder: "this drops the curtain of our ice-parties. Too bad!"

"Isn't it real too bad — the snow — to spoil our skating?" echoed Miss Nell at the breakfast-table.

But I think Mr. Graves was secretly glad of it: it deprived his enterprising young rivals of a dangerous advantage. Truly "it's an ill wind that blows no one any good."

"It will clear up by noon," prophesied Kit. "We'll have the hounds out, and a jolly run!"

But it didn't clear up. All day long, the storm continued. It was dreary. Meanwhile we inhabited the sitting-room, read some, and looked out the window a good deal more.

Even the famous sweet cider and sponge-russets failed signally to relieve the disquieting influences of the previous evening. Wash was "feverish:" he even seriously proposed to me to visit school again that afternoon, "just by way of passing the time, you know." But I prudently dissuaded him.

"Not too fast, my boy," said I paternally. "You'll run the whole thing into the ground."

Could better advice have been given him, under the circumstances? Yet, from that moment, Wash regarded me with suspicion. The unreasonable pig! But that was only a prelude to my trials with him. If he has any sort of a conscience about him, I should think he would sometimes reflect on some of his surprisingly bad treatment of his best friend that winter, and blush.

Graves came home from school that night in very good spirits; seeing which, Wash eyed him evilly.

I suppose Kit observed every thing, though he did not seem to: indeed, I don't pretend to understand his whole game that winter. But he was certainly Wash's friend after a manner, and in this instance, as also in several others, contrived to checkmate the Freshman. To do it, he projected a very amusing contrivance, the full scope of which will gradually dawn on the reader, and account for the fact, that, during the greater part of the day, he had been out in the stable, pounding and hammering at something or other. Once, too, he had ridden on horseback down to the Edwardses; and from the windows we had seen him talking with Tom in their yard. But I had not connected it with any thing special; and as for Wash and Wade, I fancy they merely watched long enough to satisfy themselves that it was not an amatory errand.

The truly wise man, young or old, will always be ready to seize upon favorable opportunities. Seeing Mr. Graves in so good a humor, it occurred to me, after the Latin lesson that evening, to bring up the subject of

"Latin derivatives" again. According to Miss Kate, Graves was a fine Latin scholar. Why not improve these stormy evenings - to get a running knowledge of Latin in its connection with English, and have the benefits of Mr. Graves's scholarship? A moment's thought told me it would be wrong to neglect so good an opportunity to acquire serviceable knowledge. So I presently asked the Freshman how many of that *list of one hundred words* he had got looked up for us. He confessed frankly that he had not yet begun on it; but added, that he would commence *now*, if we said so. As *now* is generally conceded to be the best time in the world, I concluded to take him at his word.

"What we want," said I (deeming it prudent to set forth distinctly our sharply practical views), "is one hundred Latin words which have entered most commonly into English compound words, together with their meanings, and examples of the manner in which English words are derived from them."

"I never undertook quite so *direct* a task as this before," said Graves. "It isn't taught in the schools; but I'll try. You may as well assist me, all of you."

He reflected a moment. "One of you had better act as secretary to put down the fruit of our united labors," he suggested.

I nominated Wash. I don't know with how great an interest that young gentleman entered into the arrangement. He consented to serve, however.

"And now, Raedway," said the Freshman, settling back in his chair, "take the Latin lexicon, if you please, and find — well, find the verb *rego*."

I found it.

"Read the *parts* of it."

"*'Rego, regere, rexi, rectum.'*"

"What does it mean in English?"

"It means *to rule*, like a king; *to guide, to direct.*"

"I would advise," said Mr. Graves, "that you all take a look at the word in the book, and that you try by a mental effort to fix it in your minds, with its meaning."

The lexicon was passed from hand to hand.

"You will see," continued our instructor, "that the *root*, or *body*, of that verb, has three forms; viz., *reg*, *rex*, and *rect*. Now, can you think of any English words into which these *word-roots* enter?"

"*Regent*," suggested Wade; "meaning one who rules."

"*Register*," said Kit; "from the second meaning of the verb."

"*Regular*," from Miss Nell.

"*Rector*," observed Wash; "from the third *root*."

"And *rectory*," added Wade.

"*Rectitude*," chimed in Miss Wealthy.

"And *direction*," enumerated Kit.

There were several others given, which have now slipped me.

"Well, now find *audio*," advised Mr. Graves. "The parts are" —

"*'Audio, audire, audivi, auditum,'*" I read. We all examined it carefully with the eye, and saw that in English it means *to hear*; also that its *roots* were *aud*, *audiv*, and *audit*.

"Now, what derivatives can you trace to *audio*?" inquired Mr. Graves.

"*Audible*," said Miss Nell, — "that which can be heard; from the first root."

"*Inaudible*," exclaimed Miss Wealthy.

"*Audience*," said Wade.

"*Audient*," suggested Kit.

"*Audit*," added Wash, "and *auditory*; from the third root."

"Also *auditor*," Wade continued, "and *auditive*."

Then we had the verb *moneo* found, and *dissected* it (if I may use such an expression) in the same way; getting *monitor*, *monitory*, and many others. After that, *fero*, *fere*, *tuli*, *latum*, an irregular verb, meaning *to bear*, or *to carry*, together with its kindred verb, *refero*; from which we derived *refer*, *reference*, *referable*, *referee*, &c.

Then the Latin noun *musa*; whence come *muse*, *musical*, *music*.

The noun *servus*, a slave, to which were traced our verb *serve*, the adjective *servile*, and the noun *servant*.

The pronoun *Ego*, I, gave us *egotist* and *egotistical*.

Then the prepositions *con*, *inter*, *in*, and *pro*, which appear everywhere through our language as prefixes. These twelve words made up our first lesson. Much of it was not new to the most of us; yet I may safely assert that the review did us no harm. Even the Freshman admitted that it was the best use he had had his Latin put to yet.

CHAPTER VII.

The Fox-Hunt.

ENGLISH ladies, young and old, used frequently to ride, and do even at the present day, after the hounds on a fox-hunt. It has been held to be a rather aristocratic pastime. My friend Wade informs me, that, in the Southern States, the ladies have occasionally joined in a fox-chase; and I have further learned, that, in Pennsylvania and Maryland, the goodly damsels were, at one time, a little addicted to this exciting sport.

Pity they gave it over! I cannot help thinking so. Our girls have grown far too delicate from their almost utter renunciation of out-door sports.

But in New England, so far as the writer has ascertained, the spectacle of a young lady fox-hunting is an innovation, and a very flagrant one to boot. Indeed, it is not without some apprehension that I may be exposing the young ladies of our party to social ostracism that I venture to continue my record. But, dear reader, don't *taboo* us all unheard. We are of your own kith and kin, and, when we have erred, are ready to suffer.

Saturday morning after the stormy Friday showed



broken weather, with about five inches of snow on a level, — a grand morning for a fox-hunt, as every sportsman must agree.

There was no school to-day. Even Mr. Graves could join us, if he chose. But of that we were a little doubtful; for he had indirectly hinted that he regarded it as “low-lived sport.”

I went down stairs a little before sunrise. Kit had gone down before me, however; and, as I entered the sitting-room, he called, “Come out here a moment!”

I followed to the stable. On the floor, within the slide-doors, were set two traverse sleds (one behind the other); and on them was placed a large “body,” twelve feet long (for a guess), with a bottom of plank, and board sides three feet and a half high. The forward end rose in a very lofty fender-board to keep out the snowballs. This novel sort of car was about four feet in width, and had across it four thwarts, or seats, with very comfortable backs of bass-boards. The forward sled had a tongue, with whiffletrees for attaching two horses.

“See this thing?” interrogated Kit as I came along where he was standing.

It was sufficiently prominent to be visible, certainly.

“Going to market?” I asked, somewhat disappointedly. “I thought you were going fox-hunting with us.”

“To be sure I am going fox-hunting! That thing is for fox-hunting, you must know.”

“That thing!” I exclaimed. “Why, I took that to be for trucking-purposes, or a pic-nic!”

“No bad mistake, either. But, Raed, what say to

inviting the girls to a fox-hunt? That's what I called you out here for. What say to the general idea?"

I will venture to assert that the proposition struck me quite as singularly as it will any of my readers at first. "And ride in that thing?" I said.

"Yes; all hands in this *barge*," explained Kit. "You see, it's like this with fox-hunting up here in Maine,—no lady, nor gentleman either, if never so well mounted (on horseback), could follow the hounds through *our* swamps, or over *our* rocky, ledgy pasture-ridges. It would be quite impracticable. Besides, our girls don't ride much. They all dote on the idea of riding horseback: still only one or two in this neighborhood are even tolerably good riders. Now, I know the manner our foxes generally run, pretty well. They *circle* about from hill to hill over the rising lands off to the west of us. There are roads,—rather bad ones, to be sure,—at intervals of a mile or so, leading all around from neighborhood to neighborhood, with cross-roads and winter-roads connecting them.

"Now, my plan is to lay the hounds on a track,—having first got our party together, and snugly aboard our 'barge' here,—then follow them by road as nearly as we can. We shall be able to keep in hearing of them, I know; and we may often be able to sight the chase, and be not far off at 'the death.' At any rate, we shall be sure of a good heigh-ho time, and have the company of the girls. What say?"

The scheme was a startlingly original one, and vastly alluring.

"But how do you know the girls would go?" I asked. "They might not take to it kindly."

"Oh! I'll answer for that," rejoined Kit. "In fact, I hinted it to them the other night at the ice-party. It never occurred to me till then. I found what a good time we were having with them, skating; and I thought, *Why can't they fox-hunt with us?* So I rigged up this thing. We can but try the experiment, you know. I've talked it over with young Edwards. He can furnish a horse to put ahead of my span: that will make three. And they're right on their mettle. We shall go *flying*."

Wash and Wade came out to see what was going on. It is needless to say that they hailed the project enthusiastically.

"But what will Graves say to it, think?" I questioned.

"Oh, hang Graves!" cried Wash. "He's a muff."

"But we must ask him, of course," remarked Kit.

I went after him. He was in the sitting-room, translating "Horace," with lexicon and grammar open before him.

"Mr. Graves," said I, "the boys have a conundrum for you out at the stable. Can you spare them a moment?"

He went back with me. Kit briefly explained the "barge," and gave him an invitation to take passage with us. Perhaps, as teacher, he caught sight of his public responsibility; for he demurred, and something very like a frown came out on his brow.

"It would be highly imprudent for the young ladies to go on such a *harum-scarum* jaunt; and, furthermore, I" —

"But the girls have promised to go," Kit judiciously interrupted.

"Have they?" exclaimed the Freshman in some surprise. "Well, then, I have nothing more to say. Yes" (after a little hesitation), "I will go. Thank you!"

Kit could not resist a wink with Wash.

We went into breakfast. I noticed that Miss Nell eyed us, particularly Mr. Graves, rather perplexedly. Of course she wanted to go. What young lady would not enjoy so merry a ride over the first snow? But she had a wholesome fear of doing a forward thing none the less. I broached the topic as judiciously as possible; and it was discussed in florid language by Wade and Wash. Grandmother was not one of those inflexibly rigid old ladies who sometimes make us regret the past generation less than we should. She did not oppose the girls going on "general principles," but stipulated that Kit should be sure not to "overset them." The dear old lady feared a physical calamity more than a moral one. Kit readily guaranteed *absolute safety*.

Some time before the long prayer was over, we heard a jingle in the yard. Tom Edwards had come up with his horse, a very dark-gray animal, full of fire and mettle. His name made us laugh. They called him *Gill-go-over-the-ground*, — pronounced shortly Gill-g'wover-th'-ground, — from a well-known medicinal herb common in this locality; also in allusion to his speed, which was, as I understood, something approximating the electric element. Never has young man owned horse yet that wasn't troubled with that dreadful disease, *speed*.

Billy-Boy and *Slippery-Dick*, Kit's span of bays,

were put on the tongue. Gill-g'wover-th'-ground was put on the lead.

Wash's rifle and Kit's double-barrelled shot-gun were set in a rack behind the fender-board. I felt a little uneasy at having such mortal weapons in so close proximity to ladies; but their use was to be attended with special caution. Buffalo-skins were spread over the seats; the redoubtable cider-jug was put aboard; and two small vivid flags were set up at each corner of the fender. It's no use for American youth to attempt any thing *big* without having up the national bunting, or something resembling it: they wouldn't feel right. The *flavor* of the thing would be wanting.

The hounds were taken from their stalls; and Emery, the hired man, set, in the hinder end of the barge to lead them till wanted.

Young Edwards undertook the driving from the higher front-seat. He had a teamster's whip with a twelve-foot lash, ending in a green silk snapper that cracked like a pistol.

The barge was taken round to the door. A rude step had been improvised on the left side, where an open space, about two feet in width, had been left in the bulwarks. There was also another step in the hinder end.

Nell and Wealthy were helped in, blushing a little, and protesting that it was a "dreadful-looking thing."

It cost Graves quite a sacrifice of dignity to get in, and get in so quick as he had to; for the horses were restive. But for Miss Kate, I'm morally convinced he would have cut the whole thing, and gone back to "Horace."

A crack of the whip, a creak, and a sharp jingle-jangle! We dashed away; but, glancing back as we turned into the road, I saw grandmother's lips moving in that final exhortation, — "*Now do be careful, Christopher!*" and Kit kept nodding re-assuringly, laughing good-naturedly.

The sun had come out brightly. The whole country was dazzlingly white. Ah! it was inspiring.

Miss Kate stood on the steps, waiting our approach with an amused smile. We "cut a figure," no doubt. I thought her even more beautiful than on the evening of the ice-party. Hers was a beauty that grew on one. At sight of her, Wash glowed with admiration. (Let's see: she had on that morning — what did she have on? Well, there was white to it, — a good deal of white. I think white must have been Miss Kate's favorite color; one of them, at least.) A veritable queen of the snow! All of us boys turned out *en masse* to assist her into the barge; for which attention she divided a very bewitching smile equally among us. And I'm sure I took my own little *fifth*, and felt very happy over it.

Wash had the pleasure of handing her up the step; Wade held her shawl; Mr. Graves took her lunch-basket; Kit and I gazed admiringly on from behind; her brother Tom smiled a mild sarcasm from his high seat. To him — fortunate youth! — she was only sister Kate, anyhow.

Morning greetings all round. Laughing comments on our project and novel equipage. Ecstasies over the beautiful, glittering snow.

"But I doubt you are very wrong to tempt us girls

to such rough sport," said our charmer, with half-serious, questioning eyes.

"Ah, Miss Kate!" cries Wash, "your *temptation* is not to be compared with ours!"

"But it is a most unheard-of thing — in New England," she protested.

"It will shortly be celebrated!" Wade exclaims.

We dashed past the schoolhouse. The hounds bayed joyously from behind. A moment later, we drew up at the Wilburs.

But Miss Elsie alone could accompany us. Miss Georgie must needs remain at home "to help mother." Alas for those girls who have to spend their one weekly holiday helping mother! and doubly alas for those mothers whose work is never done!

On again to take up Jule. The Sylvester mansion was situated amid quite peculiar geological scenery. Indeed, it had struck me as rather remarkable on the evening of my first visit; though I retained but a confused recollection of it. About a quarter of a mile from the house, the road led down a very steep hill into a ravine, and, at the foot of the hill, turned sharply to the left to evade a high crag; and thenceforward continued winding among crags and ledges up to the very piazza-steps. There, on turning the last rock, we espied Jule in full plumage. Something in her manner, or else it was the bright red of her cheeks, led me to conclude she had stood out there some time, awaiting us. But the ten-year-old was invisible. Just as we started on, however, I had a glimpse of him at the door of an out-house; but he dodged instantaneously. Had his orders to keep out

of sight, I fancied. Jule brought with her a strong atmosphere of robust health and musk-cologne; and, for my own part, I like the latter not quite so well as the former, but should have enjoyed both better had I not unfortunately intercepted just the slightest possible glance between Miss Nell and Miss Kate as the arrogant odor saluted us. Much to my pleasure, and a little to my confusion, Jule attached herself unhesitatingly to me, and entered upon my entertainment with a very agreeable conversation, for which I could but feel the more grateful that Wash and Wade had left me little to do elsewhere; while the pretty Elsie was Kit's care. Possibly Miss Sylvester deemed this much due to a youth who had braved the crags and the ruts at a late hour of the night for her sake. Her whole mien seemed to acknowledge my claim; and it did look as if, my behavior continuing good, I might make — an impression.

Jule's conversational powers were, by nature, unexceptionally good. She thought *strongly*. Her mind was as healthy and athletic as her body. Her thoughts impressed sharply on one's attention, — sometimes by reason of the not very select phrase with which they were uttered, but oftener from their downright practicalness and *vis viva*. It would have been quite foreign to Jule to be morbid or lackadaisical or very romantic. She was as strong a girl as I ever met, — a perfect magazine of unexpended energy, which might go right or wrong, according to circumstances: I thought it about a toss-up which.

But, sitting there in the glow of her rich vitality, I

covertly admired her. What a pity such girls can't be lawyers or clergymen! They would be morally certain to carry a jury or a congregation. Why waste all this vital force in a wash-tub? We do seriously need a committee *pro bono publico* to look up these promising young *humans*, and draw them forth from their dark corners to fill the many intellectual vacuums in higher life. Why, one girl like Jule is worth a score of the breathing, salaried *existences* we are daily stumbling over all along life's route.

Half a mile beyond the Sylvesters' was a "corners," whence another road ran northward. Up this young Edwards drove the barge at a dashing canter; but the snow-balls whistled harmlessly overhead, entirely demonstrating the practical wisdom of Kit's lofty fender.

Back in the barge, ensconced amid buffaloes, and those multitudinous shawls and scarfs which always mark the fair feminine presence, we were as cosey as cats in a basket, with just enough of the bracing morning air gushing in to give tone and vigor.

I was pleased to see the rose gradually deepen on pretty Miss Elsie's pale cheek, and thought it one of the first best fruits of our scheme.

The road led along the foot of a high, rugged ridge on one side, and a cedar-swamp on the other. There were no houses here. After about a mile from the turn, Mr. Tom drew up.

"What say for trying it here?" said he, turning.

"All right!" cried Kit. "Here, Emery, hold the team, and give us the hounds!"

All of us boys, save Mr. Graves, turned out to help

look up a fox-track. Kit and Tom Edwards both declared we were pretty sure of one somewhere in the swamp to the right of the road. Wash, Wade, and myself, each leading a hound, followed after them.

Hare-tracks intersected the swamp in every direction, and partridges whirled away before us. Not more than a hundred yards from the road, we crossed a fox-trail, partly covered by snow, and made late the previous day. But Edwards wouldn't hear of putting the hounds on that.

"He's too far ahead, Kit," he argued. "Take us all day to come up near him."

Went on again for a hundred rods, or more, to where the pastures on the other side of the swamp bordered it. Kit was ahead, and had followed up to the northward to where a brook made down the bed of a deep gully from the eastward. Coming down this gully from the direction of the farm-houses above was a fresh track, made not many minutes ago. Kit's clear "So-ho!" announced his success. The hounds heard, and bayed out exultingly. We hurried up.

"Here, Jim!" exclaimed Kit, unlocking his collar. "See here, old fellow! *So-ho, so-ho!*"

A moment of fierce snuffling, a loud challenge, and the leader sprang away. Old Nance was next unloosed; then Ginx. The woodland rang again to their clearer bay. Then all three blended their cries, — "*Ough, ough-ough-ough, ough-ough, ough!*" to which was added a distant "*So-ho*" from Mr. Graves.

We hurried back with the collars and chains to announce the opening of the chase to the ladies. They

had heard the hounds; and I could but smile at the fever of joyous excitement into which the first notes of the chase had thrown them.*

What so beguiling as the cry of hounds afield? Is it a *penchant* we inherit from our fox-hunting ancestors across the sea?—the hearty squires of “Merry England.” Perhaps. “*Blood* will tell,” they say. But, be that as it may, I will wager that no fairer faces ever graced the chase in Anglo-Albion than beamed from our fox-barge in Anglo-American Maine that bright morning.

“Oh! will they catch him?—do you think they *will* really catch the sly rogue?” cried Miss Kate. “*Poor fellow! Of course, he isn’t to blame; but, oh! isn’t it just gay?*”

“And do drive ahead!” put in Miss Nell. “I want to *see* so!”

Their enthusiasm must have richly repaid Kit all the anxieties of his invention; and it did. I saw it in his eye. Even delicate Elsie pulled off her gloves to clap her hands,—some good sharp *spats* that could but aid circulation.

“Why, how she *does* enjoy it!” observed Mr. Graves deprecatingly to me.

“And why shouldn’t she?” said Miss Kate over her shoulder; for she had overheard the remark, and was, I think, a little nettled by the tone. She put the question plump, and so laughingly quizzical, that Graves flushed under it: seeing which, she added gravely, “You may be right all the same; but I cannot help hoping you are not. Are you sure that your objections are not rather prejudices?”

I had inferred that Graves had, while we were beating the swamp, taken the opportunity to express his opinions on Kit's project. But I did not hear his reply: for Jule now took my attention, exclaiming that this *seemed like sport*, and she didn't care what "old fogies" said about it; which showed, I presume, that she *did* care a little.

I concluded that Mr. Graves's opinions had excited opposition. Generally speaking, I believe it is not a very sure road to a young lady's favor to call the delicacy of any point of behavior in question after she has, of her own accord, entered upon it. If the Freshman had not been a *cad*, he would have known better. But, being the schoolmaster, they doubtless forgave him — out of deference due the teacher — what they wouldn't have forgiven any one of us "yachter chaps;" and not to blame either. To be frank, I never much liked his seizing that chance to lecture the girls while we were beating up the fox for *his* amusement as well as our own. I hope that he did really feel it his duty to do so: that's all.

For fifteen or twenty minutes the hounds threaded the swamp, doubling in and out among the cedar, and working up north. Whether the fox had actually been in the swamp when we first laid on the hounds, we could not ascertain. The evergreen was too thick to see into. The hounds did not sight him, at any rate. Possibly he was miles ahead.

As they moved up the swamp, we drove slowly along the road, keeping about twenty rods below, or thereabouts. On a sudden they ceased doubling about, and

ran swiftly on, in an apparently straight course, for half a mile or more. We followed at a gallop. But they tacked sharply to the left, and crossed the road about a quarter of a mile ahead of us, going right for the top of the ridge five hundred feet above.

There is a great difference in the sort of sport offered by the gray fox of Maryland and the South and the red fox of New England. The latter is essentially shyer, besides being a swifter and "longer-winded" runner. The Southern gray fox does not usually keep farther than one hundred yards in advance of the hounds, often preserving this distance quite uniformly for three or four hours. The red fox, on the contrary, when first he hears the cry of his pursuers, starts off at his best paces, and puts a mile or two between them and himself at the outset, and, during a long run, rarely lets them come up within half a mile till near the end. When you see a red fox not more than a hundred yards ahead of the hounds, you may safely calculate on his being overhauled not more than half a mile farther on: he is about done for.

As we drove rapidly along the road below, we got a glimpse of the hounds going up the steep ledgy side of the ridge three hundred feet above us.

"Dear me! we can't follow them now!" cried Miss Nell in genuine vexation.

"What's the next move?" demanded Wash of Kit.

Kit then explained, that, a mile above this point, there was a cross-road leading over into the next neighborhood, at a place where the acclivity was not so great. We could go up there, and probably see or hear what direction the chase was taking.

On we go at full speed, reaching the turn in a few minutes. A long hill here confronted us; and, out of humanity to the horses, we got out and walked with them to the top of the ridge, — distance a hundred rods, for a guess. Here we pulled up for breath, and to listen.

Down to the south the ridge was much higher than at the place where we had climbed it. Near the road, it was cleared and into pasturage; but, half a mile below us, it rose in a succession of snowy ledges, along which grew stretches of shrub-spruce, contrasting blackly with the white snows.

Far behind this rough hill the hounds could be heard baying faintly. But, as we listened, the sounds seemed to come nearer, till on a sudden they burst out in full cry on the side next us.

“Ough, ough-ough, ough, ough, ough-ough!”

There’s music for a sportsman!

First Miss Wealthy’s keen eyes, then the rest of us, espied them coursing along the crest of one of the ledges. Miss Kate drew out a small opera-glass.

“Oh! can you see the fox?” was the eager inquiry from all the girls.

But Reynard was nowhere visible.

Kit explained that the game was no doubt a mile ahead of the dogs at this time of day; and then went on to tell us of half a dozen instances where he had known of a fox “circling” about this very hill.

In a few minutes they had passed round to the eastward, out of sight, and well-nigh out of hearing. We waited anxiously to see whether they would come round again. At first we inferred that they would; for the

baying seemed to be *approaching* from round the westward spur. Then there was a silence of a few minutes, succeeded by fainter cries lower down the mountain-side.

"Gone for the 'pond woods!'" exclaimed young Edwards.

"Quit the hill!" echoed Kit simultaneously.

On again at a full run, emerging presently into a quiet little farming neighborhood of half a dozen houses. Good staid-looking folks came rushing out of doors in unwonted excitement as we tore along amid a cloud of snowballs to the merry, brassy notes of an old cornet which Kit had brought to take the place of a hunting-horn.

Just what sort of an opinion the honest people formed of us it would be unwise to conjecture.

Meanwhile the hounds were coursing a rough, bushy pasture down to the left of the road, flitting in and out among alder-clumps; and, as we came dashing down the hill, they ran across the road in full cry not more than two hundred yards in advance, and entered the woods to the right. This was the "pond-woods" of which young Edwards had spoken, occupying a great interval bottom at the foot of a long pond, of which we had got snowy glimpses from the top of the ridge above.

"What did I tell you!" cried Mr. Tom to Kit, with a sapient nod.

"Oh, there!" cried Jule despairingly. "They never'll find him in that great, thick woods!"

"I'm so afraid we've lost him!" lamented Miss Nell.

Miss Kate glanced regretfully to Kit. "Oh! they'll have him out of there," said that experienced young gentleman. "He will show them some fancy doubling; but they'll put him out. Never you fret."

"But it will be a two-hours' job," laughed Mr. Tom; "and there's no telling which way he may take at last."

The road ran along the border of the woods for nearly a mile. We let the horses walk slowly, stopping occasionally. The hounds were now deep in the woods, off to the right.

On the left, to the south-west, there rose another high hill, its cleared sides white with the new snow. Its top was crested with spruce.

"When the fox finds he can't shake the dogs off in the woods here, he will either take for 'Old Hazeldock'" (the hill to the south-west), "or cut back to 'Hedge-hog Hill'" (the ledgy ridge-top around which the hounds had previously been running). "He will be pretty sure to do one or the other; but which of the two he will do, a fellow can only guess at. I don't suppose the old chap knows himself, yet, which he is going to do." Thus Kit explained the situation.

Off in the pasture, to the left of the road, there was a high, bare knoll, fifty feet above the road, perhaps, and distant from where we were sitting twenty-five or thirty rods.

"If we were only on that knoll," I suggested, "we could hear and see vastly better." Young Edwards glanced at the intervening bushes and hollows. "Can we do it?" said he to Kit.

"I think so," was the reply. "Down with the fence, Emery!"

The "hired man" threw aside the poles and stakes. The horses' heads were turned; and we cleared the ditch with a bump, and went smashing through the brush, and up the side of the knoll, at a run.

I had not dreamed of their undertaking so doughty a feat. Miss Nell and Miss Else had protested nervously at first, but laughed as gayly as the rest when we found ourselves on the knoll a minute later.

"'There are some things which can be done as well as others,'" quoted Kit, laughing.

"I hope you have not taken Sam Patch for your example, sir," observed Kate dryly.

"Possible you don't appreciate the immortal Sam?" bantered Kit. "I thought you admired courage, Kate. Come, now, don't frown on the physically bravest youth of his time in America."

Miss Kate found something so outrageous in this exhortation, that she turned to look the offender full in the face. Their eyes met—for a second; then Kit, still laughing, jumped out of the "barge" under pretence of unchecking the horses. There was something in this ocular manœuvre which I did not quite understand. I do not know whether or not Wash observed it. Wade was talking with Elsie.

From the knoll-top we could look off over the woods. The view from this point, also, commanded the pastures along the flanks of the woods on both sides.

Young Edwards declared we could not do better than stay here till the fox had been driven out of the forest-lands.

The hounds were now far down toward the pond.

"How do you know that he hasn't a burrow down that way somewhere?" Wash questioned.

Mr. Tom thought it likely enough there might be burrows down there, but was very sure the fox wouldn't take the ground so early in the chase.

"Our red foxes — those about here at least — never take to a hole until the dogs fairly drive them to it," he continued. "I have known a red fox to run all day back and forth from hill to hill, and finally enter a burrow not half a mile from the spot where he had first been started in the morning. The sly fellows know we have a trick of digging them out, or smoking them out; and you never get one of them to enter a den so long as he stands a ghost of a chance of getting clear by running."

Kit remarked that there was one den, in a ledge just to the west of the lake where we had skated, which was an exception to this rule."

"Yes; but we *stopped that up* long ago," said Tom. "The foxes *would* whip into that whenever they could; for, once in there, nobody could either dig them out, or smoke them out; and the rogues knew it."

Recourse was now had to the cider-jug (I must beg the reader to bear in mind that it was *sweet* cider); and a basket of those sponge-russets was produced from under one of the seats. Jule, somewhat injudiciously, proposed a rural pastime known as "naming apples," or "naming my apple:" but Miss Kate quietly *tabled* the proposition, as likely, I suppose, to involve some undesirable personal complications; at which Kit seemed a good deal amused on the sly. We all sat chatting,

listening, looking off; when, on a sudden, Miss Kate cried, "*Ah, ah-r-r! See there! What is it? Oh! it's the fox!*"

We all stared after her outstretched finger.

Off fifty rods, just where the cleared slope of the Hazeldock Hill came down to the woods, lo! there was Reynard, our Reynard, trotting along.

He had just emerged from the bushes.

Wash made a grab for the rifle.

"Too far," said Wade quietly.

"*Still!*—let's watch him," said Kit.

"He hasn't seen us."

Miss Kate put up her glass.

"Oh, poor fellow!" she murmured, watching him. "His tongue is out!—how tired he is!" but added, rather inconsequentially, that the hounds were far down toward the pond yet; and she was *afraid they had lost the track*.

The glass passed rapidly from hand to hand. The girls were vastly eager for a critical glimpse. We sat quiet. The wind was west. The fox had not seen us, and could not take the scent. He trotted nimbly up from the bushes into the open pasture; stopped for a moment; cocked his ear to listen for the hounds; then licked the snow, listened again, and scuttled away toward the hill.

"Ah, isn't he *cunning!*" exclaimed Elsie.

In a few minutes he was out of sight in one of the many hollows which furrow the side of the great hill.

Then the cries of the hounds came nearer and nearer, till, eight or ten minutes later, they burst out into the

pasture, and followed rapidly on the track, — first old Jim; then Nance close behind; and, lastly, poor Ginx, four or five rods in the rear.

“Now then!” cried Mr. Tom; “steady!” And we plunged down into the road again, and whipped up smartly.

The road led along the northern base of the hill, but took us at no point much nearer the summit than the knoll we had just left; viz., about a mile and a half. As we were halting at the place where the road forked at a farmhouse just north-west of the hill, Wade espied the fox again, coming round on our side of the peak, and keeping just below the cap of spruce on the crest of it.

I judged him to be two thousand meters from where we sat. As Tom Edwards had predicted, he was “circling” the hill. The hounds were far behind, on the opposite side.

By this time it was considerably past noon. Kit knew the people at the farmhouse, and struck a bargain with a very pleasant old lady for a pot of coffee, which we took in the barge with our lunch.

Meanwhile the fox had come round the hill a second time, followed, about five minutes later, by the dogs. They were gaining a little.

After some discussion, it was decided to try a *coup d'état* on him; and, on his making his appearance a third time, Emery was started off with the shot-gun to intercept him on his fourth circuit, and shoot him if possible, or at least head him westward, where Wash or Kit might pop him with the rifle.

Accordingly, after Emery had started, they two went off across the pasture to a point about a third of a mile below, and nearer the peak. Here they concealed themselves in a clump of low hemlock. They thought the fox, when headed, would take down into the valley, and so across to the next hill, in about that line of direction.

It was a good conjecture. We saw the fox turn the base of the peak; and, a moment after, a wreath of white smoke flushed up from behind the rock where Emery had concealed himself. The fox instantly darted off on a tangent, and ran almost direct for the hemlocks.

“They’re sure of him!” exclaimed Wade.

The girls fairly held their breaths: we all did, as we ran unsuspectingly forward. But, when within forty rods, the fox stopped short (they ought to have risked a shot at that very instant); sniffed once; then tacked to the right with the speed of an arrow, and came straight for the farmhouse. In a minute more he was running through the garden-patch, not six rods from the house-door; and crossed the road not fifty yards in advance of the horses’ heads. He saw us too, or at least the horses, but merely gave us all the white of his wicked little eye. If we had had one of the guns, or even a revolver, we might have shot him like a fly. He was lolling smartly as he passed; and his bush was getting wet. We sat like statues, and watched him breathlessly. Crossing the road, Pug slipped through the rail-fence, and legged it for the alders which filled the valley along the brook beyond us. Wash and Kit came puffing up, adjuring the luck. Tom Edwards sat and laughed: so did the girls. By the time the

boys had reached us, the hounds came down at speed, and, dashing through the garden, scrabbled through the fence, yelping like curs on the hot scent. A few minutes after, Emery came panting down across the pasture.

"In with you!" shouted Mr. Tom. "I have it! He will play dodge with them a while among those alders; then take to that high ridge beyond the stream, unless we head him. And, once he gets on that ridge and the hills beyond, we've seen the last of him, as well as the hounds, for to-day. There's no road leading in there. We must head him. We must set a man on that ridge, and run him down the stream."

"Which, — the fox, or the man?" queried Miss Kate.

To this her brother replied only by a glance of utter contempt, and started off at a gallop along the west fork of the road.

It was not far from a mile across to the cleared ridge beyond the alder-flat. We were certainly not more than three minutes crossing the interval.

Emery was here set down again with the gun, and instructions to follow down the cleared land above the alder-flats as fast as he could; firing at every thousand yards, or less, to keep the fox off the ridge.

We could hear the hounds scouring the alder-bottom. There were thousands of acres of it. The fox was at hide-and-seek with them, with plenty of room for all his arts. The horses were turned: and we went back as quickly as we had come; then turned down the other fork of the road which skirted the alder-swamp on the left. The report of Emery's gun came faintly across the wide bottom.

"Good!" exclaimed Kit. "He won't leave the alders with that gun going up there; and he won't go back to the Hazeldock after being fired at. They're sure to work him down the bottom. Go ahead, Tom!"

"You see," he continued, "the bottom is cleared; and there's a great hay-flat about two miles below here. If we can get him out on to *that*, with the hounds close behind him, there'll be sport. *Put 'em along, Tom!*"

It seemed to me that Tom *was* putting them along about as fast as was consistent with the safety of the party. It was descending ground. We gradually came off opposite where the hounds were; then passed on, and, in an exceedingly brief space of time, sighted the great cleared flat, stretching out its snowy expanse ahead. There was, perhaps, a square mile of it,—a true meadow-bottom. The road ran along the foot of the rising ground to the east of it.

At the lower, or south-east, corner of this flat, young Edwards pulled up.

"Now out, and cut across the foot of the flat!" exclaimed Kit. "You hold the horses, Jule! Can you?"

"Yes, indeed!" cried our fair Amazon.

"Well, then, every man out, and take stations to head him off!"

"But he may *cheese it* out in the rear of us, and get on to the ridges to the east!" exclaimed Tom.

"That's so! Then, Wade, you put back up the road, and take the rifle; and the rest of you come on to range across the foot of the meadow."

Mr. Graves looked as if he would have much pre-

ferred remaining in the barge; but there was no help for it. We all ran off after Kit through the splashy snow; for the warm afternoon sun had begun to melt it considerably.

A hundred rods from the team, Kit stationed Graves behind a stump, with directions to keep quiet, and out of sight, till the fox came down to one hundred yards of him; then *up*, and yell just his awfulest! At about an equal distance farther on, I was ambushed behind an old root. Kit and Edwards ran on, and, jumping the stream, took their positions beyond.

We had none too much time. Scarcely had Kit and Edwards got to cover, before I saw the fox—a mere black speck—run out of the dark woods-line across the head of the meadow. He followed the stream, threading along the farther bank. He had been in sight perhaps thirty seconds, when the hounds dashed out of the bushes, and sighted him for the first time, I think; for a perfect chorus of wild yelps burst out.

The fox was now running for his life. The report of Emery's gun from the side of the opposite ridge startled him. He jumped the brook, and struck off in the direction of the barge. But, a minute later, the glitter of Miss Kate's glass, or else the tinkle of the bells, turned him across the brook again, to the right; and he bore down directly toward Kit. He had not discovered any of us.

Kit waited till he had come within fifty rods; then sprang up with a loud shout,—a succession of shouts. The hounds were not more than thirty rods behind now, and were running on sight. On the fox tacking to the

left when Kit sprang up, the dogs cut across diagonally for him. Tom Edwards now disclosed himself; and the chase veered still more sharply to the left. Kit and he were both running on. Graves and I jumped out successively, and joined in the race; dogs and boys all running on, hallooing and yelping. Swift-footed old Nance cut in ahead of Jim, and closed up within ten rods of the fox. The course was now almost due east. Pug was aiming for the ridges in the rear of the barge.

Where was Wade with his rifle? If Wade were only there! and he ought to be there somewhere.

In my eager anxiety I tripped over a root (the meadow was full of them), and pitched headlong into a hollow brimming with snow and water. Struck on my hands — splash! There was a sharp *crack*, a shout, at the same instant. I jumped to my feet. The chase was over (I fear my own share in it was of very little account). Wade had, from his lurking-place behind the highway fence, leisurely popped poor Pug. The next moment, the hounds were upon him tooth and nail.

Poor little wretch! But he had given us a merry chase.

Mr. Tom and Kit, running up, wrested his dabbled carcass from his grim pursuers, and bore it in triumph down to the barge.

Ah! then and there were exclamations of pity, and one or two little, bright, regretful tears, which never quite escaped fair lashes.

I wondered if poor Reynard would have thought he had earned them too hardly. Yet many a human death extorts smaller tribute from human pity. At any rate, he must rest content with what he got.

I am well aware, that, from an English standpoint, this shooting of the fox from out before the hounds, and heading him in the meadow, would be ranked as decidedly unsportsmanlike. But some allowance in this respect can fairly be claimed on account of the unusual topographical difficulties involved by the chase. But for this trick, we should hardly have secured the fox that day.

The sun was just setting as we rejoined the girls with our trophy. But we had to wait for Emery to come across the flat, — rather over a mile. Twilight was falling as we started on.

Kit judged that we were, by road, about eight miles from home.

“That will take over an hour!” sighed the Freshman.

Evidently it would; for the snow, now partially melted, exposed many of the rough rut-edges to our runners.

“But nobody is to suppose,” cried Kit, “that anybody’s going home yet a while.”

“Not going home?” said Miss Kate. “No more foxes to-day, I guess?”

“Not a bit of it!” laughed Kit. “We will finish the day more befittingly. — Drive to ‘Hunt’s,’ Tom. Go it, now! Here, let me have that whip!”

“Hunt’s” proved to be a little two-story tavern at a “corners,” where there were eight or ten other houses, shops, &c., a couple of miles farther down the road. Every thing was quiet about the cosy little establishment: every thing had the aspect of having been quiet for an indefinite length of time. But we drove up, fif-

teen minutes later, with noise and racket sufficient to compensate the worthy publican for previous stagnancy. About a hundred yards above the house, Kit had struck up on the cornet; and that had set the hounds baying out of pure sympathy. Our noisy arrival seemed to sweep over the still house like an avalanche. A terribly excited dog rushed out; and there was an instant and stunning fight between him and Jim. Mr. Tom laid about them with the long whip. The horses pranced; and, in the midst of this *mêlée*, a very fat man pulled open the door, winking astonishedly. Surprise seemed to render a rather simple face doubly simple. Him, Kit, out of familiar disrespect, addressed with, "Halloo, Hunt! Help these ladies out, can't you? and then run set your old cold parlor afire! We've come to make you a visit, and spend the evening with you. We want dinner,—not supper,—mind ye, dinner, with beefsteak, coffee, *and things*; the best you've got. Never mind your dog: mine will soon take care of him!"

By more than ordinary luck, so Kit seemed to think, there was a fire in the parlor,—an easy-going little room, with cane-bottomed chairs galore, and a very gay-colored wool carpet. There was a fire-frame, with some cosey mats basking in the bright glow.

The girls were forthwith ushered thereinto.

The horses, meanwhile, were taken to the stable to be curried and fed; and, coming in, Kit effected a special arrangement with friend Hunt to have our *dinner* laid in the parlor, instead of the cheerless old den of a dining-hall.

A genial, enjoyable half-hour was spent getting warmed

before the cheery fire-frame; then an extension-table was brought in, and dinner laid shortly after.

The meal was a sort of combination of dinner and supper. There were beefsteak, cold fowl, potatoes, pickles, Chili sauce, corn-bread, Graham-bread, sponge-cake, and mince-pie; also warm biscuits, toast, strawberries (preserved), cookies, custards, tarts, a pumpkin-pie (which proved a rather tight fit for *eleven*, albeit it was a large one), and pound-cake, with both coffee and tea.

Hunt did the honest thing for us. We were astonished at his profusion, — very agreeably so: for fox-hunting is an appetizing sport; and, since breakfast, we had taken nothing save lunch and cider.

I remember that we sat down in couples, save Kit, who, being the *eleventh*, undertook to preside. Jule, who had carried me successfully through the day (save that slight mishap on the meadow, which I am convinced would never have befallen me had she been at hand), was now my partner at dinner. Wash had Miss Kate, Wade Miss Elsie, the Freshman lively Miss Nell, and our friend Tom the demure little Wealthy.

A sense of leisure seemed to possess us. We took time, and doubtless ate a great deal, — for I believe we were over an hour about it, — and, after that, despatched Emery to one of the shops for a dessert of filberts, chocolate-drops, &c.

I hardly know what gives this tavern-dinner so pleasant a niche in memory, unless it be the surprise which came of its unexpected good quality. *That*, or the pleasant company and jolly conversation, it must certainly have been. Perhaps, though, it was the singing;

for songs — songs of all degrees — succeeded the feast. “Beautiful Star” was apostrophized at length. “Beautiful Dreamer” was once more invoked, but rather inaptly succeeded by “Capt. Jinks.”

These preliminary strains were followed, after chocolate-drops and humorous comments, by a selection from the national stock of war-ballads; to which Wade proudly contributed a counterpart from the war-songs of Dixie. He did it so spiritedly, and withal so tunefully, that he quite carried us away with him. His “I wish I was in Dixie” had so sad a touch, that it cost Miss Kate a single bright tear, and quite won the sympathy of all the girls.

Hunt came to the open door, and eyed the singer in a mild maze.

Indeed, Wade left us in a highly sentimental condition; and there really was no knowing what might have followed, had not the Freshman come to our rescue with his store of college-songs, — the songs of Old Bowdoin.

First he transported us

“Way down on the Bigelow Farm;”

all the while assuring us,

“We won’t go there any more.”

“Bigelow, Bigelow! — way down on the Bigelow Farm.”

Graves had a very good voice, and entered into the spirit of these canticles *con amore*. Both Wash and Wade had heard them before, and assisted in the singing so far as their acquaintance went; but the Freshman was the *life* of the performance.

Next he sang those "Three Roguish Chaps Together;" of whom I may briefly repeat, that

"The first he was a weaver ;
The second he was a miller ;
The third he was a little tailor, —
Three roguish chaps together."

But they fell into terrible mishaps, — all because they could not sing, — and turned out surprisingly bad ; for

"The weaver got hung in his yarn ;
The miller got drowned in his dam ;
And the Devil clapped his paw
On the little tailor
With the broadcloth under his arm."

The fate of the latter so tickled the fleshy Hunt, that he precipitately retired.

I think we were all a little surprised at the zeal with which Mr. Graves sang these selections. The fact that they were college-songs, seemed, in his eyes, to quite excuse their strong flavor of *ribalderie*. He was thoroughly loyal to his *alma mater*.

Warming with his theme, the Freshman gave us next a still *freer* song, — in fact, a really dissipated song, — which he assured us was popular with the sophomores:—

"Landlord, fill the flowing bowl
Until it doth run over ;
Landlord, fill the flowing bowl
Until it doth run over.
For to-night we'll merry, merry be ;
For to-night we'll merry, merry be ;
For to-night we'll merry, merry be ;
And to-morrow we'll get sober."

I sincerely hope such a *chanson de boire* does not represent the general tendency of things at Old Bowdoin. I cannot believe that it does. But, be that as it may, the Freshman went on to sing, unblushingly, that

“He who goes to bed,
Goes to bed sober,
Falls as the leaves do, —
Dies in October;

But he who goes to bed,
Goes to bed mellow,
Lives a long, jolly life,
And dies an honest fellow.”

I hope we had not demoralized him. It couldn't have been the cider, — that was *sweet*: so was the company. To this purely bacchanalian ode succeeded a classic one, —

“Lauriger Horatius
Quem dixisti verum
Fugit Euro citius
Tempus edax rerum.
Dulciore melle
Rixæ, pax et oscula
Rubentis puellæ,” &c.

Somebody called for a translation of the chorus.

Mr. Graves facetiously refused it.

I judge him to have been wise. From the little I know of Latin, this chorus seemed a rather florid one.

Emery came in to announce that the moon had risen.

Sure enough, it was nine o'clock! Where *had* the evening gone to? Vanished in song.

The horses were hitched up. We bade adieu to Hunt, and rode blightly homeward, singing "Oralie:" —

"When the blackbird in the spring,
On the willow-tree,
Sat and rocked, I heard him sing, —
Singing Oralie.

Oralie, Oralie!
Maid with golden hair,
Sunshine came along with thee,
And swallows in the air.

In thy blush the rose was born;
Music when you spake;
Through thine azure eye the blue
Sparkling seemed to break.

Oralie, Oralie!
Maid with golden hair,
Sunshine came along with thee,
And swallows in the air.

When the mistletoe was green
'Neath the winter snows,
Sunshine in thy face was seen
Kissing lips of rose.

Oralie, Oralie!
Take the golden ring:
Love and light return with thee,
And swallows in the spring."

The piece has a beautiful tenor, which Wade did not fail to render with fine effect.

We arrived in the home neighborhood at about half-past ten, and parted for the night in a very amiable mood.

I am aware that any critically-disposed reader might take occasion to remark that this latter part of the fox-chase has something of the out-on-a-spree flavor: but I beg to assure him that it was not in that vein at all; unless, perhaps, exception be taken to the Freshman's *chanson de boire*. But that must be set down to that liberal education of which our good people are so proud.

CHAPTER VIII.

Trapping Foxes. — The Fox-Bait. — Shooting Foxes by Moonlight. — Cunning Rogues. — Tenderer Scenes. — Miss Kate's Admirer. — Where were Kit's Eyes?

I PASS in brief review over the events of the next few weeks.

The next Thursday after our Saturday hunt was Thanksgiving Day. School did not keep. The fox-barge was out during the forenoon. But a few minutes after one, P.M., the hounds "holed" the fox at the foot of a crag three miles to the north of the neighborhood. The burrow was behind large rocks. We had to give him up, but found solace in a big Thanksgiving dinner at Kit's.

That night the fox-hunters gave a ball. It was what friend Wash calls a "one-horse" affair, however, and hardly worth recording. There were but seventeen present. We had only invited a few friends of our companions in the fox-chase.

The Saturday following, all hands were out again in the barge; and a fox was run down handsomely about a mile below Hunt's. I may add, that we again took

dinner at the tavern, — a mere repetition of our former programme. In practice it would bear repetition, but not, I fear, in description.

During the next week we were engaged in trapping foxes in the swamp over to the west of the farm, and along the borders of the forest above.

Emery, by Kit's order, had slaughtered the fox-bait one morning, much to everybody's relief connected with the establishment; for it was as much as one's scalp was worth to get near the hole in the side of the pen where the old brute was kept. We had eleven traps set, baited with horse-flesh suspended from a branch or bough directly over them. The traps themselves were chained, and concealed under chaff, or bits of fir and spruce boughs.

We had but indifferent success with our traps, however. Only five were taken in them; though the bait was often stolen.

Generally speaking, the red fox is far too cunning for this sort of thing. No skill in setting the traps can quite compete with his sagacity.

Still another stratagem proved successful for about a week, but never after that. It consisted of the following arrangement: A quarter of the horse-beef was carried out to the edge of the woods, and thrown down on a knoll in a conspicuous position. A couple of us, with our guns, would then take a buffalo-robe apiece, and repair, just at dusk, to a thicket of firs, or a clump of low hemlock, off twelve or fifteen rods from the bait. There, rolled up in the buffaloes, and hidden amid the boughs, we would lie in wait for them, taking care

always to lay our ambuscade to the leeward side; and this was almost always the southern side at this season of the year.

On three successive nights a fox was shot before nine o'clock (evening); but, on the fourth night, a fox was fired at, and missed. Apparently he went and told all the other foxes. The next evening there was a great and querulous *yapping* at a respectful distance all about the *lure*; but never a fox showed himself.

They seemed to be informing us that the trick was now "*too thin*;" in short, that it was "played out" entirely. We afterwards changed the position of the bait, carrying it down to the swamp; but had no further success.

Two foxes were also shot from a window in the back-side of the stable by getting up early, and watching there for a shot at about five o'clock in the morning.

At that time they seemed to come boldly up near the out-buildings after bones, chickens' legs, &c.

This seeming temerity was probably the result of their experience, that, at this hour of the morning, there was rarely any one stirring.

This fox-hunting furnished a sort of background for scenes and sentiments of a tenderer nature. I laugh now a little grimly as I think of it all. Wash was by this time fairly established as Miss Kate's admirer. I really could not see that he was any thing more; and at times I had an idea that the lady would just as lief have had attentions from any of the rest of us. But Wash had a gayety of manner and conversation that it was not in her nature to repel.

After a few gallant attempts to dispute the prize with him, Wade had withdrawn from the rivalry, and devoted himself to the fairy Elsie; not wholly by way of passing the time, it is to be hoped.

For my own part, I was Jule's property. I felt as if she had a warranty-deed of me, body and soul; or at least a mortgage, liable to foreclosure at any moment. She was such an energetic girl, such a consummate manager, that I was really quite helpless. But it was a very pleasant sort of bondage: I rather liked it.

Nevertheless, I am not ashamed (though I perhaps need blush at such perfidy toward Jule) to confess that I watched, or at least *observed*, Miss Kate rather narrowly. She puzzled me a good deal. She was a sphinx. Wash admired her very much: that was plain enough. The Freshman fairly grew green under it. But Miss Kate did not seem *to feel* it much. I even wondered whether the girl had any heart. (But that is a rather old query, I think.)

I had long chats with her, on general topics always. I thought her the least bit "strong-minded;" but she was far *too beautiful* to permit of its showing.

If ever a fellow got old enough to think seriously of marrying, I had an idea that Miss Kate would be just the *one* for a struggling, rising young Anglo-American to marry,—a tender, thoughtful, able *second* in the great battle of life; one upon whose judgment he might rely in a crisis, and whose advice might temper and beautify his noblest aspirations.

Would Wash win her? I could not unreservedly wish him success.

But where had Kit's eyes been all his life, that he took little or no notice of this pearl of the whole region? I wondered, too, at his lifelong stoicism.

CHAPTER IX.

Latin in the Background. — Charades and Fair Charaders. — A Geographical Game. — Wash and Mr. Graves. — Wash spends an Evening with Miss Kate, and afterwards has a Little Confidential Chat with the Bed-Post. — Wash talks of leaving Town. — A "Cross Gray" Fox. — Miss Kate has a New Admirer. — Somewhat of Mystery.

I DOUBT whether the study of the Latin language ever furnished pretext for more enjoyable social gatherings than those evening lessons in "derivatives." We used to meet alternately at Kit's, Miss Kate's, and the Wilburs'.

Once Jule entertained us. But the distance, as also the presence of two very aged persons, and three or four quite the reverse of aged, made one or the other of the three former places preferable for scholastic purposes.

Besides the Latin lesson, we fell naturally into a variety of parlor-games, commonplace enough, but rendered current coin for amusement. Dull as is a charade, it may be quite enlivened by a fair charader.

I recollect a sort of geographical game which was very popular. It was played by simply sitting round a table, and each throwing into a hat or basket a slip

of paper upon which was written the name of some city, country, or province. These were then shaken up; when we each, in turn, drew out a slip, "without looking." Beginning with the first, we had then, in turn, each to read the name on his or her slip; then proceed to give the location, boundaries, climate; describe the people, and recall any peculiarities we could. It thus formed a very pretty geographical and historical review. I remember, among the slips which fell to my lot, Muscat, Peru, Wyoming, Iceland, Havana, Morocco, Naples, Athens, Hudson Straits, Reikiavik, Tucson.

Of course, some of us were occasionally "stuck," and rather laconic in our descriptions. But there is really a deal of sport, as well as information, to be got out of the game by the right sort of a party.

Three weeks passed in this way very quietly. But we did not stand still. "Silent agencies," as the geologists say, were at work. Wash was growing dreamy and absent-minded; bad symptoms in a young fellow, — very bad.

Mr. Graves waxed gloomy, and was correspondingly watchful. There's no sentinel like jealousy. He and Wash did not pretend to look at each other much, save on the sly. They were very polite, even gay with each other. The rest of us boys enjoyed *that*. Kit was forever matching them off.

Wash and Tom Edwards became great friends; though I fancied Tom was a little surprised at the circumstance at first.

Soon after this new alliance, Wash began to call at the Edwards's on his own hook, independently of the rest

of us, — to see Tom, of course. Occasionally, when he had escorted Miss Kate home from our evening gatherings (as was his wont), he would go in for an hour, instead of prudently taking leave of her at the doorstep. Of course he would not have gone in if Miss Kate, or perhaps Tom, had not invited him.

At length, he called on a Sunday evening: this was the third week of their acquaintance, I think. It began to look like business; and it took no great amount of sagacity to predict a crisis not far ahead.

The next Sunday evening, Wash called again. On all such occasions he made an extensive toilet; but I fancied that this last was about the *stunningest* one yet. He was very gay, — almost feverishly so. I had it in mind to give him a word of purely disinterested advice; but I changed my mind.

He staid late: in fact, I don't know just how late; for I was asleep when he came up to our room, which we occupied together. I scarcely waked. He did not light the lamp. But I think it must have been considerably past midnight. He came to bed without speaking to me. Perhaps he thought me as sound asleep — as I was five minutes later.

Later in the night I was aroused by conversation in the room. Those of our readers who may have read the third volume of this series will perchance remember, that, under certain circumstances, Wash is addicted to noctambulistic exploits, — a confirmed jabberer of his visions. I was, therefore, not greatly surprised to find Wash partly up in bed (though still under the sceptre of Morpheus), having a little confidential chat with the bed-post.

At such times, it is my duty, as his friend, to administer a kick, or a good honest poke in the ribs, hard enough to waken him; at which he always curls quietly down: never hits back, nor remonstrates, however faithfully I may have discharged my duty.

According to custom, I had doubled my knuckles to lend him a "quieter," when a single muttered word so excited my curiosity, that I perfidiously stayed my hand, and settled back to listen. Surely "a friend should bear a friend's infirmities."

"O-o-o-o-h, ah-r-r-r!—such a *beautiful little white fox!* O-o-o-o-o-h!—such a beauty! Ah-r-r-r!" quoth the sleeper, suddenly jumping up to a sitting position. "Ah-r-r-r! There she goes! . . . By Jude! *If that ain't Kate!*" The speaker drew an instant long breath, and was silent for a moment; then began murmuring inaudibly, but very earnestly, in the midst of which I distinguished the words, "Please, Miss Kate! just a moment, please! *Such a beauty of a white fox!* Now, Kate" (imploringly), "let me tell you! Oh, no! no-no-no-no-no-no! Don't say that, dear Kate! dearest Kate! 'You won't hear a word?' That's too cruel of you, Kate dearest! Well, well" (in tones of despair). "Forgive me, then" (a deep, deep sigh). "Do you *really like Graves?* 'What made me ask that?' Because the fellow admires you, of course. Well, he *does*. I know he *does*. *Of course* he does. Don't be angry, Kate. Excuse me! Pardon me!" (beseechingly.) "'Forget it!' Ah, yes!" (very sarcastically.) "It's easy forgetting, — always! . . . Shake hands? . . . Certainly; thank you! . . . *Friends!* . . . *Friends!* . . . Yes.

If *you* can forgive, I ought to! . . . 'Let it pass?' . . . Well. . . . 'All a joke!' . . . No joke for me, Kate. . . . I didn't say you was to blame! . . . Of course, you couldn't very well tell me before. — Oh! what a yelping those hounds make! By Jude! . . . Such a *beautiful little white fox!*"

Then he fell to muttering and puzzling over something very hard and eagerly for some moments; all of which he rather startlingly concluded by exclaiming, "D—n him!" on a sudden, loud enough to be heard 'all over the chamber.

I thought he had gone about far enough, and gave him the punch, that, in good faith, I ought to have given him some minutes before. He subsided as usual, and lay submissively down again.

But I knew something had happened. Wash is too much of a gentleman to use such a highly condemnatory adjective as the above aloud in his waking-hours; and I felt sure that some circumstance had afflicted him sorely to extort it from him asleep. But it had come out with a hearty snap. Whatever his wandering fancy was, there was no doubt that he had been entirely sincere in the expression of it. I lay a long time thinking it over.

Wash had very likely been foolish enough to propose — something — to Miss Kate. Whether it was marriage on the spot, an elopement, or a ten-year engagement, I was quite unable to surmise; and may add, that I have never found out. From his *recent remarks*, I inferred the lady's answer had not been altogether to his liking.

While I pondered the chances remaining, I fell asleep again.

When I woke, Wash was up, looking out the window abstractedly. He was already dressed. It was just sunrise. As I stirred, he turned with great apparent gayety.

"Splendid morning!" he exclaimed. "Kit just knocked to say that we must have the dogs out, and be off in an hour: so 'pile out!' But Raed, seriously, don't you think this fox-hunting is getting about played out?"

It had not occurred to me in that light yet.

"I'm getting about tired of it," continued Wash off-handedly. "Too much of one thing is good for nothing. I think I *shall go back to town* by to-morrow or next day."

I expressed my great surprise.

"Well, I don't know," said Wash. "Don't you call it rather *dull* here? I've been feeling so for some time. Of course, I don't expect to take the rest of you with me; but, for my own part, I think, on the whole, that I've had about all I want of fox-hunting for one winter. As I said before, 'Too much of one thing,' &c. You understand; getting a bit dull, — played."

I felt pretty sure that I understood.

"But I supposed, Wash, that you would be the very last one to go back, or talk of it," I observed, getting up. "Why, Wash, I thought you were too sweet on a certain young lady to think of such a thing."

"You did really?" interrupted Wash, regarding me keenly for a moment. "Possible that you did?"

I had certainly.

Wash seemed somewhat impressed by the fact that I had.

"Miss Edwards is a very pretty girl," he said at length. "Something of that sort *might* happen, were I to be here in her society all winter. But, dear me! what do I want of pretty girls? No room for *such baggage* on a yacht. Perhaps that's one reason why I think I may as well be off. To tell you the truth, Raed," he exclaimed with a burst of great apparent frankness, "that is one reason why I'm going."

I was, nevertheless, tolerably confident that it was not the whole truth. But no man is bound to convict himself, I suppose.

I seriously advised Wash to remain with us.

Not he.

We went down to breakfast.

Something was said about Wash being out rather late the preceding evening; and this young arch-hypocrite modestly allowed himself to blush, and seem very much confused. But I could see that it all cost him a pang. I suppose he thought that almost any thing was better than the grim truth of the matter.

By way of carrying it all off, he began joking immoderately with Miss Nell. I think he contrived to give almost everybody the impression that he was in high spirits. But, happening to look at Kit, I caught him surveying Wash with attentive eye.

The Freshman was not only gloomy, but acrid. Very likely it hadn't improved his dreams to hear Wash come in from a call on Miss Edwards at one in the morning. Oh, how young Love does pester young fellows!

That day we four fellows chased a "cross gray" fox, following the hounds on horseback along the roads. It was finally shot on the farther side of the Hazeldock Hill, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, — shot from before the hounds.

We then rode down to Hunt's to dinner.

At table, Wash let out that he thought of going to town next morning. Wade was unfeignedly surprised: he stared.

Kit also professed astonishment, and regarded Wash uneasily. He was very sorry, he said. He hoped nothing had been done or said to offend him.

Wash warmly disclaimed any thing of the sort; and then pleaded *ennui*, and an ardent desire to hear Nilsson (then in town).

I resolved to put him on his mettle. "Wash," said I, "if you sneak off in this way, we shall all think that you have either tired of Miss Kate, or that *she has tired of you*; and most likely the latter."

"Nonsense!" protested Wash, reddening.

"That we shall!" cried Wade; and I noticed, too, that a queer light had already broke in his dark, eager eye.

Kit looked wondrously uneasy. Finally he said, "Come, come, Wash, don't go! Don't leave Miss Kate to the Freshman, like this. 'Twould look cowardly. I bind you not to go!"

But Wash was equal to the occasion.

"Leave her to the Freshman!" quoth he. "Why, man alive, I know nothing of Miss *Kate's likes and dislikes* — *in that way*. I've enjoyed Miss Edwards's

society very much. But you all ought to know that my intentions don't reach so far as you intimate. Good heavens! can't a fellow escort a young lady home from an evening gathering without such a construction being put upon it? But, if you have been attributing such designs to me, I see that I *owe it to the lady to be less attentive in the future*. Indeed, I begin to fear that I owe you all an apology for monopolizing her so much."

Now, if that was not shrewdly said to cover Miss Kate's breaking off with him, then I am mistaken. I was filled with admiration of the fellow. Here was tact, as well as "cheek."

I don't know whether or not Kit understood: perhaps he did. I know I should not have done so but for the nocturnal revelation I had received; and I am very sure Wade did not. Said he, "Much obliged, Wash. I accept the apology. Shall be glad to take your place *there* occasionally."

"Take it, and welcome," said Wash. "I wish you joy of it."

But I saw his fingers clinch *whitely* under the table as he said so.

Generally speaking, the most of young fellows pay a pretty sharp price for their love-affairs, — the first two or three, at any rate.

That evening we met at the Wilburs'. Wash and Miss Kate greeted each other very much as usual; but he turned away to sit by Miss Nell. Wade immediately slipped into the vacancy thus made, and devoted himself.

Later in the evening, I saw Miss Kate glance once guardedly toward Wash; and there was a wistful, almost pained look in her eye, which puzzled me a good deal.

Wash was seemingly enjoying himself with his lively companion.

But I thought he looked *older* next morning.

CHAPTER X.

Wash defers hearing Nilsson.—Wade shines.—Wash presumes to give him a Word of Advice, which is not well received.—Kit gives an Opinion.—Jule.—What “Granny” Sylvester thought of it as reported by the “Ten-year-old.”—The Usual Reward doubled.—A “Martyr in a Good Cause.”

WASH did not return to the city that next day, nor the next.

What I had said at Hunt's to him before the others had pricked his pride, no doubt; and, on thinking the matter over, I suppose he found nothing to reproach himself with.

Surely it's no disgrace to admire beauty; at least, it's a much greater disgrace *not* to admire it. Very wisely, as I think; he resolved to *face the music*, and brave it out. Cowards alone run from any thing.

On the Tuesday night following, we were at the Edwards's. Wade shone—like a sapphire! These Southern fellows can fairly scintillate of an evening, when they feel like it. From the way the affair had turned, I suspect he had got the idea that Miss Kate had all along preferred him to Wash; and he naturally

felt elated thereat. But Wash evidently bore him no malice. They came home together; and, as they went up stairs, I incidentally overheard, from the hall below, as follows:—

Said Wash, "Had a good time?"

"Splendid!" says Wade. "Miss Kate is just glorious!" (This last a little maliciously, I fancied; but Wash magnanimously *swallowed* it.)

"Wade," said he, "take a fool's advice, for once: *don't go too near.*"

"Oho!" laughed Wade. "I think I'll go as near as I can."

The foolish fellow actually distrusted the best and most disinterested piece of advice that could possibly have been given him.

"All right!" says Wash in quite a different voice. "Go ahead!"

Kit called me back into the sitting-room; and we sat talking till near midnight. Just as we were going to bed, he said, "You don't suppose Wash and Wade really mean any thing serious *down along*, do you, Raed?"

"Can't tell," said I.

Kit was silent for some moments.

"I hope not," said he at length.

"Why not?" I asked, feeling a little curious.

"Why not?" he repeated, turning with a sharp glance. "Any thing of that sort might seriously interfere with our plans. I should much regret it—on all accounts."

I could but feel that he was right. But this was a consideration which kept continually slipping out of sight that winter.

But, though taking a kindly interest in the affairs of my comrades, I must needs say that I had a job of my own. Jule was one of our party, and attended nightly, wind and weather to the contrary notwithstanding. She declared that the distance (one mile) was "nothing." And I suppose, that, as she said it was *nothing*, it was; though I used sometimes to suspect that we had hit upon a new definition of the word.

The ten-year-old never now made his appearance. And having once been Jule's escort homeward, and thus got my hand in, *nothing* else that I could possibly conceive of would answer. As a consequence, I retain in memory an indelible recollection of those hoary old crags as seen by the dim light of the inferior heavenly bodies. Were I, by any strange aeronautic chance, to drop down there out of a balloon at midnight, I think I should at once recognize the locality, and instinctively wend my way up to the piazza-steps.

But I confess the task was not an unpleasant one. I always had my reward — liberally bestowed.

The only question which puzzled me was, How much of the earth's periphery can a young fellow afford to traverse *per noctem* for a kiss, with perhaps a repetition of the same, occasionally, to boot?

I am aware that it is of that class of problems involving "two or more unknown quantities:" still I respectfully submit it to any sympathetic reader; merely remarking, that I had a good deal of trouble with it.

My going home with Jule was a standing joke with Kit, — one that acquired flavor with each repetition apparently.

Worse still, Miss Kate and Miss Nell got to enjoying it; and, among them, they at length fixed me up a reputation as a sort of martyr in a good cause. If anybody can stand *that* with equanimity, he is a greater saint than his humble servant the writer of this poor paragraph.

To cap the climax, my regular arrivals at the piazza-steps at from ten to eleven began to be regarded with suspicion by some of the older members of the family. I had not seen so much as a hair of the ten-year-old for more than a fortnight; in fact, I had begun to sparingly indulge the hope that he had, like an untimely bud, been gathered in all his juvenile innocence to "a holier and happier sphere." But nothing of the sort had happened. I think it was a Friday night that we found him on the piazza, swinging round a post. He had been silently, and without doubt philosophically, observing our approaching steps.

On espying him, Jule had (with that wise penetration peculiar to older sisters) bidden him begone; but emboldened, perhaps, by my ire-restraining presence, he as laconically declined.

"You start!" repeated Jule.

"Won't!" said he, taking an impudent bite from a wormy "Baldwin."

Jule gave him a glance that smacked of the wrath to come.

But the urchin had a mission that night. He continued to gaze steadfastly into my face.

"Halloo, Mr. Raedhead!" said he after a critical ocular inspection.

"Good-evening, sir!" I said in propitiatory accents; Jule meanwhile regarding him helplessly.

"Know what *granny* says about you, mister?" he demanded, swinging round to look from the outer side of the post.

I silently ignored any curiosity on that score; and Jule made a quick movement. But he roared out, with his mouth full of apple, "She says you're either a bad un, or a fule to keep com" —

He never got any farther with it; indeed, the last clause was half yelp. Jule had taken two steps, and "nailed" him. He kicked and dug; but her athletic white hand held him without any perceptible difficulty, and brought him back with her.

"Good-night," she said; then laughed a note, and added, "Never mind what you hear, please."

I said "Good-night" and "No," and took myself off, not wishing to delay merited vengeance.

But, in my haste, I fell into a stone-hole a few rods below, and broke a very important connective of my apparel. And presently, as I was re-organizing, a couple of sharp slaps resounded cheerily, followed by a howl of anguish; then another couple, — on the *other side*, I took it, — with concomitants afresh.

"Never show yourself on this piazza again," said a low, stern voice, succeeded by more slaps. Then a door slammed; and fresh voices chimed in.

I got up, and fled.

How the "balance of power" stood in that house an hour later, I could only conjecture; and I awaited Jule's

appearance the next evening with some curiosity, not to say anxiety.

She came. There was certainly nothing in her manner to indicate that any thing unusual had happened over night; but I noticed a red scratch on the back of her right hand.

That night it was very cloudy and dark; and it was, perhaps, in consideration of this fact, that the *usual reward* was doubled. But either this circumstance, or the darkness, so confused me, that I got lost among the crags, and came near being drowned in the brook, now swollen to a torrent.

It was after eleven before I got to cover, only to be met by respectful inquiries from Kit and Miss Nell as to the state of old Granny Sylvester's health. Nobody would believe that I had not been passing a supremely happy hour with the "old folks."

These are but the merest outlines of the hardships which beset my luckless attentions to Jule: luckless, I say; for I shortly after fell from her good graces,—fell irrevocably.

Yet, if there is any thing I admire, it's an older sister who keeps these ten-year-olds under.

CHAPTER XI.

A Thaw. — Coasting. — Downing Hill. — Some Description of the same. — Four Hundred Feet through Space. — Nervous. — Mr. Graves very Nervous. — The Old Pung. — Wilkins's Bend. — Some fearfully Rapid Coasting.

ABOUT the 19th of December, as nearly as I can now recollect, there was rain for several days, — an unusual circumstance at this season of the year so far north. But the “thaw” terminated sharply in a “cold snap,” which laid a strong crust over the snow, and left the roads one glare of ice.

A rather desolate prospect, so far as fox-hunting was concerned, I thought. But Kit opened a new vein of amusement, — a very exciting one.

“Hurrah!” he shouted. “Now for some crack coasting!” And, during the whole of the day, he and young Edwards were busy getting their sleds and old pung ready for evening.

Wash and I amused ourselves by coasting from the pasture hill down upon the pond. There was a descent of forty feet or upwards, about a quarter of a mile in length. It offered very fair sport: so we thought. But

our coasting-feats had, until then, been confined mostly to the Common at home (Boston).

Kit merely laughed at us for "fooling" out there in the pasture.

"Wait till evening," said he, "and we will show you how it's done."

He was as good as his word.

Directly after supper, the fox-barge was harnessed; and all hands set off for Downing Hill, taking the old pung and hand-sleds in tow.

By all hands I am meant to include the young ladies of course.

Downing Hill, considered as coasting-ground, certainly merits full description. It was not a single hill exactly, but a succession of hills (five in all), the first of which began a hundred rods or more beyond the Sylvesters'. At the top of the first there was a level, or rather moderately ascending grade of, perhaps, fifty yards, to where the second steep hill began; and so on, up, up, up to the summit of the ridge, — the same ridge, which, a mile farther north, formed the craggy "Hedgehog Hill," about which we had chased our first fox. The whole distance from top to bottom was about a mile; the perpendicular height (according to a trigonometrical calculation which I made next day), *three hundred and ninety-one feet*.

The surveyor who laid out the highway over that ridge, up those steep inclines, must have been a singularly fearless and aspiring genius.

Up the first two hills the road ran in a nearly straight line; but, just beyond the crest of the second,

there was a light curve of perhaps twenty degrees to north-west. Thence the course was direct, as before, to the very summit.

Starting from the top, then, the track led down the first three pitches east, twenty degrees south; then due east down the last two. The road was enclosed on both sides, — partly by stone wall, partly by rail fence.

At the foot of the lowermost pitch there was a flat of about seven hundred yards' width, on the farther side of which was a sharp ascent of thirty feet (for a guess), which then continued on, at a less incline, up to the Sylvester yard.

This seven-hundred-yard flat, with the thirty-foot hill at the end, was the "home-stretch," along which the fearful velocity acquired on the mile of descent might gradually expend itself, and be stayed.

As a precautionary measure, ashes were sometimes strewn on the thirty-foot hill to act as a sort of brake at the end of the flat.

Local tradition says that the first youth to whose adventurous mind the project of "running" Downing Hill occurred was appalled at his own hardihood.

I can well credit it. If he had any thing like the ordinary human bump of prudence on his cranium, I should suppose he would have been. But that was seventy years ago.

At first, as I imagine, he only ventured to slide from the top of the first of the five hills; then, after a time, from the top of the second. It must have been a long time before he ventured to launch from the third hill, and take the chances of successfully rounding the curve

at the top of the second. But eventually — not in one winter, I will wager — he seems to have reached the dizzy top of the ridge, and, thrusting aside all regard for the great law of gravitation, to have taken the whole four hundred feet at one reckless plunge.

Thus do male beings grow in valor, and criminals in crime.

It may even be that this final exploit was not the achievement of a single generation. On reflection, however, I incline to believe that it was. The first settlers here were all live Yankees; and anybody who rightly appreciates Yankee character must know that no Yankee youth, having once slidden from the first pitch, would ingloriously die (unless he died on the hill) without reaching the top.

The feat became hereditary. This man's sons took to it more readily, no doubt; and his grandsons accepted it as a matter of course.

But I was not surprised to learn that the hill had been the scene of several serious accidents, one of which proved fatal: indeed, my only wonder was not to see the ditches full of skulls.

As may be supposed, the curve above alluded to was the *most* dangerous point adown the course. The boys called it "Wilkins's Bend," from an old gentleman who lived on the level on the north side of the road, a few rods above the curve. The road here *bent* round the foot of a gravel knoll, which had been partially cut away, leaving a high bank on the upper side. But, on the lower or outer side of the curve, the bank sloped down fifteen or twenty feet to the rail fence; and a very

unsteady, drunken-looking old fence it was. Thence the ground sloped off to the bed of a gully eight or ten rods to the south of the fence. The points of the posts and stakes, sticking up *invitingly* over the bank, in no way added to the charms of the bend, nor yet enhanced the pleasures of the prospect while nearing it at a high rate of speed. I speak advisedly; for I have particularly good reason to remember Wilkins's Bend.

As a coasting-ground, I do not believe Downing Hill can be matched in New England. Nature has here provided facilities for this sport on a gigantic scale. What had seemed a tame enough amusement on the Common became here a thrilling and wildly fascinating vault through space, — a veritable *todten tantz*, where Death was only held aloof by the skill of a single practised arm.

On arriving at the Sylvesters', the horses were put up, save one, which was harnessed into the pung, to drag it, together with the sleds, to the top of the ridge. Jule joined us. The ten-year-old was hired, for a small consideration in fractional currency, to stand out on the piazza, and stop all teams from passing up till we should come down.

Tom Edwards, meanwhile, was strewing the thirty-foot hill with ashes, a pailful of which he had procured in-doors. This done, he started on with the pung and sleds; and the rest of us followed afoot across the long flat, and up the longer hill, — a merry party, invigorated by the keen air.

It must be understood that none of us boys, save Kit and Tom Edwards, had ever been on this hill before; nor had Mr. Graves ever slidden here.

On reaching the top of the first pitch, we four drew up, supposing that the coasting was to start here.

"Come on, come on!" cried Kit, who was ahead. "Tom's half way up the second pitch now."

I think that even then a slight feeling of uneasiness crept over us; but we were too busy talking with the girls to give it weight, and went on up the second pitch.

Here Mr. Graves wanted to know whether they were going up any farther; and I saw Wash and Wade turn to cast timorous glances down the long icy incline. But Kit was already round Wilkins's Bend, and out of hearing.

Miss Kate said she presumed the boys were going to the top of the ridge: they usually did.

"But it is a long, and, as I often think, very perilous slide," she added. "It always frightens me."

"Then let's not go up!" exclaimed Graves, with an uneasy stare at the lofty crests ahead.

"*I guess we had better go up this time,*" replied Miss Kate calmly. "The *boys* are ahead; and they will expect us."

Of course, none of us presumed to remonstrate; nor did Mr. Graves venture to appeal from a decision so quietly given.

"Why, it's just splendid, Mr. Graves!" cried Jule. "The sleds do just fly! You've no idea how we shall come down here!"

Mr. Graves looked as if he had an *idea*, and that it wasn't a pleasant one.

Miss Elsie was ahead with Kit: so was Miss Georgie and Wealthy. Wash was walking behind with Miss

Nell; Wade with Miss Kate. Jule was giving me a graphic account of the hair-breadth perils which former coasters here had eluded, — by the merest chance, it seemed to me; and I must say, that I was more terrified than amused by it all.

The fact was, all these merry young people were used to the hill from childhood: we were not; and, for that very reason, we kept quiet.

But, up the last two pitches, conversation died out quite on our part; for, to tell the truth, we were getting mighty uneasy.

Kit and the rest had arrived at the top before us. They had taken out the horse, and were arranging the sleds in line. There were several other young fellows — strangers to me — with their sleds.

As we gained the summit, the moon was just coming up, amid dark clouds, over the far eastward ridges. It was a fine, wild winter-scene. The moonlight shone on the bright white snow-crust in a gleaming line, running far off under the silver orb, and was reflected from the darker line of rough ice which marked the road up which we had toiled.

But what a gulf! The great, white flat seemed almost at our feet; and yet it was a mile away. Were these rash boys going to precipitate us into this wildly glittering abyss? For a moment, I fancied they must have taken leave of their senses. It looked suicidal.

“Now, girls, let me help you into the pung here!” cried Kit.

“But really, Kit!” I began to remonstrate.

“Mr. Raed’s a little scared!” laughed Jule; and

there was a silvery peal from several of the young ladies.

That stopped my mouth. "Go it," thought I, "and I'll go with you! But, if we do bring up on that flat alive, I'll give all my second-best clothes to the poor, and contribute twenty-five dollars towards the 'city soup.'"

I noticed that Wash had lost much of his usual volubility, and Wade had grown very quiet.

Kit was hurrying the girls into the pung. He had taken the seats out, but had filled the bottom of it with buffalo-robcs to make it cosey.

"Just room for the six of you," he said. "Now, all snuggle down, and cling together. — A regular bird's-nest pudding of them!" he exclaimed, turning laughingly to the rest of us.

In truth, it was a pretty sight, those six girl-faces just showing over the sides of the high, old pung, — a nest of bright eyes, red lips, and curling hair. But much of the pleasure of this picture was lost in a shudder at the peril to which they were instantly to be exposed.

Kit's long coasting-sled, "Dexter," was placed in front of the pung, and the thills laid along the top of it, and lashed firmly with a broad strap. The other sleds, to the number of five or six, were then hitched on, one behind the other, in the rear of the pung. A sort of *train* was thus made up, of which Kit's sled was to be the *locomotive*; for he was to go *stomach down* on his own, between the pung-thills, and steer the whole thing. Here were six sleds, besides the great pungful

of girls, behind him, ready to take a leap of four hundred feet! It made my blood run chill to think of it. What if he should run out? Instant destruction for the whole party, himself first of all!

I still think it a foolhardy exploit. It was staking too much on the instant exercise of one fellow's skill. Custom often makes people thus over-bold.

"Why, I've run this hill hundreds of times!" was Kit's only reply to my respectful remonstrance.

But Graves was openly protesting. He even went so far as to urge, nay, almost order, the girls out of the pung, — in his capacity as teacher, I suppose. But they declined to comply. Perhaps they thought that in this he was rather exceeding *his capacity*. They evidently had full confidence in Kit's experience. And indeed, we, his comrades on the yacht, knew him too well to doubt him far: otherwise we should never have taken passage in his wake down that icy hill.

Wash and I bestowed ourselves on the next to the rear sled. Room was made for Mr. Graves on the sled in front of us; but he utterly refused to accompany the *train*.

Tom Edwards had the rear sled, — a large, heavy one, with sharp, narrow steel shoes. It was his business to keep the train from swaying and "snapping off" round Wilkins's Bend.

Wade took passage with him.

Kit was already *flat in position* on his own sled.

"Now, boys," he advised, "keep your feet up, and don't get shaken off the sleds. Be ready with your *toe*, Tom, at the bend. I'll give the word just as we come

to pass it. When you hear the word, *all lean hard to left*; hug the inside of the curve; throw your weight that side.—And, girls, please don't say a word as we go down. I must do what talking there is done this time myself." (It appeared that some of them were sometimes a little apt to scream.) "And, now, are you all ready?"

"All ready!" says Tom.

"Shove off, then!"

Tom pushed from behind; and the boy on the sled next behind the pung started that. Very slowly, the long train crawled the first rod; then, dipping over the brow of the pitch, gathered headway rapidly.

Faster, faster, faster!

We were at the bottom of the upper pitch, and, flying across the level, shot down the next.

The *hubbly* motion on the rough ice grew *softer*.

A roar began.

The air cut into our faces.

Tears flew into my eyes.

What if they should fly into Kit's?

And now, from all the ironwork of pung and sleds, a low, but to me awful, hum arose, and grew sharper as we drove down the third pitch. "*Hang hard!*" shouted Kit in a strangely muffled voice, which seemed scarcely to reach us.

We all *hung* to left, and clutched tenaciously at the sled-beams.

Momentarily there was an irresistible sense of being flung on, and a jumble—in my own eyes—of tears, fence-posts, and gravel-banks.



The next second we were going down the fourth pitch, with Wilkins's Bend far above us. All the jolting motion had ceased. There seemed to be no friction even. We appeared not to touch the ice. The track had apparently become a river of oil; and a sense of ease stole on one, startled only by the dire quickness with which the long pitch *passed up from under us*.

Then, for a moment, we seemed to press with terrific weight on the level stretch at the foot of it, which now deflected our line of descent; then, like an arrow in air, were on the lower pitch.

For my own part, all sense of personal peril had gone utterly. In its place had come a feeling of pure exultation, a sense of frenzied delight. The rough stone wall on either side had my merest contempt. 'Twas the poetry of coasting.

So great had been the velocity, that the seven hundred yards of level road at the foot of the last pitch was passed with the speed of a cloud-shadow on a day of strong winds. Only toward the farther end of it did the *hubbly* motion recommence. We went forcefully up the thirty-foot hill, despite its coat of ashes, and, gliding on, struck with no great gentleness against the Sylvester steps.

A long breath, which was much like a sigh, came from every breast.

"How did you like it?" exclaimed Kit, jumping up from his sled.

"Kit!" cried Wash impressively, "that's — that's tremendous, prodigious! Let's have another!"

There is something fearfully fascinating about rapid

motion for poor mortals. I never yet knew a young fellow who would not cheerfully jeopardize his life for a rapid ride.

The other horse was hitched to the pung and sleds; and all hands started for the top once more.

The distance from the Sylvesters' to the top of the ridge was about a mile and a half, — a pretty long walk, considering the steepness of the pitches. Two slides were deemed a pretty good evening's sport.

At the top of the hill we found Mr. Graves, shivering in the cold wind which swept across the crest. He looked a little surprised to see us coming back safe and sound, and, I almost fancied, a little dissatisfied.

He did not inquire how we had enjoyed our slide; but, on Kit's repeating an invitation for him to join us on our second descent, — an invitation which Miss Kate very prettily seconded, — he concluded to do so.

I was very glad to have him go; for, having shared my own distrust and fear, I really wished him to share the pleasurable excitement of the descent.

One of the stranger boys was left to lead the two horses down; and we started off much as before, and made the trip with entire good fortune: though, in turning Wilkins's Bend, the strap connecting the hind sled snapped; and Tom and Wade made the remainder of the descent on their own hook, but without any difficulty.

"What think of it, Graves?" Wash demanded.

Said Graves, "It's wonderful, — as much the slide as the reckless skill that directed it."

Thus closed the most exciting evening's sport it has ever been my fortune to share.

CHAPTER XII.

More Coasting. — The Old Pung comes to Grief. — Long “Trains.”
— Toiling up with Jule. — Rather Late. — On behind. —
Snapped at Wilkins’s Bend. — Jule *snaps* me. — A Quarrel.

THE next evening we were again at Downing Hill; and, if I remember correctly, the next also.

I think it was the fourth evening that an accident happened to the old pung; though, fortunately, not to its pretty freight. We had just turned it around at the top, and Kit had gone off a few steps to get his sled to put before it, when the old thing, starting off of its own accord before we could any of us seize upon it, ran violently down the first pitch, but, on the level below it, jumped the ditch, and, striking against the wall, smashed itself completely. Indeed, about all the old pungs in the vicinity had met their death on this hill, first and last. Kit said this was positively the last one he knew of.

After this disaster, we had to bestow the girls on the sleds, — an arrangement which, I think, gave equally as good or better satisfaction all round; for each gentle-

man now had the pleasant task of holding a lady on a sled. But, from having to use more sleds, it added to the length of the train, without adding to the general safety of the eighteen or twenty who rode on them.

Tom complained bitterly to Kit of his well-nigh unavailing efforts to hold the "tail end" from "snapping off" at Wilkins's Bend.

Furthermore, the girls' dresses were liable to get displaced, and be drawn under the runners: this despite all preliminary tucking up on our part; in which case, either dress or lady "had to come" with amazing spitefulness.

During this time, Wade was Miss Kate's escort. Kit used always to place their sled next his own.

Next came Wash with Miss Nell.

The third place used to be alternately occupied by either myself with Jule, or Mr. Graves with the Misses Wilbur on a longer sled.

Then came a miscellaneous concourse of coasters. Tom Edwards, on the "Dragon," used generally to close the file. Kit and he had the conduct of every thing, and exhibited unusual care and skill: otherwise there must have come catastrophe, I am confident.

We had been sliding here nearly a week; in fact, I believe it was the sixth evening; and, after our first descent, Jule and I had lagged a little behind the others making the ascent. I do not now seem to recall what interesting topic we were discussing; but suffice it to say, that, when we reached the top, the train was already made up, and ready to start.

So nothing remained for Jule and *me* but to hitch on.

our sled, hastily as possible, behind Tom Edwards on "The Dragon."

"Now look out sharp, Mr. Raed!" advised Tom as we were getting seated. "Be ready to put your *toe* down quick and hard at the bend, or you'll be snapped!"

I had a theory of the way *toes* should be put in there.

All ready! and off we went like a rocket; only we went down, instead of up.

It may be but the effects of subsequent fancies; but it seems to me, that, on that occasion, we went down with more than usual fury.

I think Jule was just the least bit distrustful of me. As we took the third pitch, she reminded me of the fact that the bend came next. "Now put your toe down hard!" says Jule over her shoulder. At the same instant, the general order of "Hang hard" was shouted from the fore; and, thus doubly stimulated, I *hung* as hard, and *put my toe in* as sharply, as I could, I may safely assert.

But either we were foredoomed (which I prefer to believe), or else, possibly, my toe went in wrong. The coupling-strap snapped like thread; and our sled went over the bank as if shot from a catapult. There was an instantaneous crash and rattle of fence-rails. The sled struck broadside to on the snow-crust below, and we both went off it. A hard snow-bank a few yards beyond received me with a dizzying, sickening shock, that for a moment quite deprived me of sense; but I had had a glimpse of Jule whirling a frightful somersault farther down.

For a few seconds I lay perfectly still. I felt calm enough; though every thing was whirling round, and my stomach was very sick. For my life, I could not seem to stir; and a feeling of horror as to Jule's fate took possession of me.

Was she killed? else why didn't she say something, or, at least, move? I either hadn't the courage, or else was too much stunned, to look over the snow-bank. A few moments later, I heard a deep sigh; then all at once, it seemed, Jule was standing before me.

"Are you dead? are you dead?" she exclaimed.

"No—no!" said I; but my tongue felt very thick.

"Oh, you aren't dead!" she cried indignantly.

"Not at all," I said, and, making a strong effort, got up. "Are *you* hurt?" I found sense to ask.

"Nothing to speak of," she replied shortly.

I was foolish enough to say that we ought to be very thankful.

"Thankful!" exclaimed Jule in sudden heat. "Why didn't you put your toe down? For pity sake, why?"

"I did, I did!" said I. "I did, honestly, Jule."

"Humph!" muttered my indignant partner. "I'd better *steered that sled myself*."

"I don't doubt it, Jule," I admitted. "The fact is, Wilkins's Bend is too much for me."

"Any sort of a bend would be too much for *you*, I reckon!" retorted Jule with fearful sarcasm.

"Jule," said I frankly, "I am very sorry. Pardon me, — if you can. I am sorry."

"Sorry!" said she contemptuously. "I don't see how that helps it. Look at that fence!"

It wasn't a pleasant thing to look at. The nose of the sled appeared to have struck a post near the top. The post was broken short off, and two lengths of the fence knocked down. The rails lay all along the slope below.

A very weak idea occurred to me.

"Jule," said I, "seeing we are not hurt much, don't you call it rather romantic, — our taking such a tumble together?"

But practical Jule merely laughed at me.

"Romantic!" she mimicked. "I don't see any thing romantic in going head first through a rail fence, all because you hadn't sense enough to *put down your toe*."

I thought this last *fling* a rather hard one. She fairly hurt my feelings; and I had not a word to say.

"And, if you are going to be so romantic as this," sneered Jule, "you will please slide with somebody else."

That was too much.

I said, "Very well, Miss Sylvester."

In short, we quarrelled.

Kit and Tom came panting up, followed by all the others, and found us, amid the ruins of the fence, engaged in mutual recrimination. They had expected to find us dead. At first they stared; then began to smile — audibly.

I will not say I was not glad to be found alive; but it was very exasperating, — very. Wilkins's Bend had "snapped" me; so had Jule.

I said I had good reason to remember the place: it certainly lost me a sweetheart; for, from that night, Jule and I were worse than strangers.

The insidious Wash stepped into my shoes early the next day.

CHAPTER XIII.

Another "Crisis." — Wade in Trouble: he waxes Vehement, and talks of visiting his Mother in Baltimore. — Meanwhile I catch Sight of a Desirable Vacancy, and become a Humorist. — "Queerie Days." — Something like a "Glamour." — The Fox-hunters' *Soirée*.

WHEN a young fellow sees trouble such as I at this time saw, he is not apt to meddle with or even take much notice of the affairs of his friends.

Yet, however so deeply plunged in affliction and chagrin, I should have been blind indeed not to have observed that Wade was "pretty far gone." He attended Miss Kate everywhere. When we slid, he was her cavalier; when we had the barge out, he sat by her side; after all our evening gatherings, he escorted her home; and latterly, like his predecessor Wash, he had begun to call at the Edwards's quite independently of the rest of us. Then, too, he was feverishly gay at odd times, and surprisingly moody and perverse at others, — symptoms which I had begun to identify.

I foresaw (whenever, for a moment, I rose superior to my own sorrows) that a crisis — another crisis — was at hand.

From taking long evening walks amid a certain craggy section of the district, I had fallen inadvertently into a habit of sleeping rather late mornings, — later than my comrades considerably; and the habit clung to me even after Wash had begun to *do the walking*. Great griefs, they say, induce sleep. Perhaps it was grief did it.

But to resume. About a week after the affair at Wilkins's Bend, I was aroused one morning by Wade. Wash was already up, and gone down (he and I did not interfere with each other much of late). Rousing up, lo! it was Wade alone; and, on getting sufficiently awake to rationally look him in the face, I felt convinced that it was Wade in trouble.

At that my heart went out to him. Misery loves company (?)

"Wade, old boy, what is it?" I said; for his was a face on which his woes always smote hard.

"Good - morning, Raed," he replied listlessly. "They've called breakfast, I believe."

I hastily arose to dress. Wade sat down to gaze out on the white lake. But I knew he was quite wretched.

"Raed," said he at length, "I ought to visit mother and my sisters at Baltimore. I've about made up my mind to spend the remainder of the winter with them."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed (though I was not wholly surprised). "You don't mean it!"

"I think that I rather ought to do so," he said with gloomy evasion.

"What! and leave us all up here? — *leave Miss Kate?*" I demanded.

"Raed!" he cried out, jumping to his feet, "that girl is a cold, heartless flirt!"

"Beautiful girls 'most all are," I commented with freshly-springing misanthropy. "Miss Kate is very beautiful undoubtedly."

"Yes, she is," repeated Wade with sombre fire glowing in his dark eyes. "I never saw a more beautiful girl: I never did, anywhere! And she is a lady too, — every whit a lady. *But she is utterly heartless, and, worse still, perfidious.*"

"That's rather strong talk, Wade," I said. "Think again. You cannot mean all that."

"I do!" cried he vehemently. "If I could find stronger terms, I would use them still. She is just like all your cold-blooded Northern beauties, — *heartless, perfidious!*"

He was in a raging excitement; and there was an old-time fury in his eye which I did not much like.

"Curse the North!" he ran on. "I wish on my soul I had never entered it! It's no place for me. I hate ice! O-o-o-ogh! . . . It may be *beautiful*; but it's *cold, cold, and utterly heartless!*"

I did not like that, but wisely held my tongue, and soon began to pity the fellow. He was unhappy and desperate.

"I don't believe you have slept a wink all night," I said after a pause.

Wade had gone to the window. He turned passionately; but I was not angry. I suppose he saw well-meant sympathy instead. He sat down, and looked silently out on the lake while I finished dressing; then he went to the glass to brush his hair.

"Raed," he began, "I know you think I'm an impulsive fool; *and I am*. And I beg your pardon, old fellow" (with a sudden burst), "for hurting your feelings. I was entirely to blame, — all to blame."

I was only too glad to shake hands over it.

This was Wade all over, — ready to strike you dead if you foolishly irritated him, but sorry from his soul the next moment.

Whatever had really passed between him and Miss Kate, I know not. Wade never resumed the topic with me; but his attentions to her stopped short.

Nor did he carry off his defeat quite so well as Wash had done. Perhaps the reckless little god had wounded him more deeply. He was moody and owlsh for several days. Worse still, he held himself quite aloof from Miss Kate; though she ever greeted him pleasantly and kindly, and even went out of her way, I thought, to give him good-evening and a word's good cheer.

"To a man up a tree," as some of our facetious reporters say, it looked as if both Wash and Wade were "floored."

There was a vacancy at Miss Kate's elbow, — a very desirable one; I thought none the less so that the two previous occupants had held rather brief tenure.

I told Kit of Wade's announced intention of departing for Baltimore, and let him draw his own inference. He was thoroughly vexed, and really felt very badly about it; at least, he seemed to.

I think Wade and Wash had some private conversation about this time. It is not likely that they *condoled* together: young fellows rarely do that sort

of thing, I believe. But I surmised that Wash gave his cousin a little worldly-minded advice, which probably did him no harm; for he said no more about Baltimore, and resumed his *devoir* to Miss Nell, who presently cheered him up.

Meanwhile the most Mr. Graves and I did was to watch each other with a view to the *vacancy* above hinted at.

The rascal had an advantage of me at the school-room, which I had no doubt he abused.

But I bethought myself of the extremely pleasant hour Miss Kate and I had spent together on the lake, as also of the many pleasant chats since; and, coupling these with the disasters which Wash and Wade had suffered, I grew suddenly hopeful. Who knew but that Miss Kate—but that I—(I declare, the personal vanity implied in that thought makes me, in view of the result, wince so, that I really can't finish the sentence.)

Never before, and I hope I may add since, had I been betrayed into so expanded an estimate of myself.

Cautiously, and very strategically as I imagined, I proceeded to take Wade's place. I even flattered myself that Miss Kate was a good deal pleased with the change. She used certainly to smile a great deal during those first few days. I rather thought I was growing humorous, and exerted myself correspondingly in that direction. It's very delightful to keep a pretty girl smiling: it not only heightens her beauty, but heightens one's good opinion of one's self. I deem that the very highest office of wit: besides, it is a mutually co-operative exercise.

Ah! those were "queerie" days. A glamour still hangs over them. Miss Kate could be just simply delightful, and, were I to speak with reference to my *then* state of mind, I should certainly say *bewitching*. I may add, that she was moderately fond of exercising this gift.

Ah, well! Time flew: he's always flying.

Christmas came. The "fox-hunters" gave another ball. We had the hall over the store. But these "fox-hunters' balls" are incidents scarcely worthy of record. Both the music and the dancing were irredeemably "third-rate."

New-Year's we changed the programme, and had a "*soirée*," with even worse success.

Nobody (save our particular party) knew *what it was*, and, as a consequence, *didn't dare to come*, except a few hardy youths of the baser sort, who hung round the door.

This latter incident vexed Kit. But Miss Kate was so amused, and laughed so much, that I rather enjoyed it, after all.

CHAPTER XIV.

Wash has the Impudence to offer me Advice, which I reject with Merited Scorn. — Out in the Barge again. — A Strange Track. — Kit's Story. — The Lumbermen. — Dan. — "Gee, Buck!" — A Wild Ride along a "Logging Road." — "Treed." — Smoked out. — A Scare. — Holding the Horses. — Felling the Hemlock. — The Game shows Fight. — A Lively Scrimmage. — Our Fair Companions show the "White-Feather." — A Fisher. — The Ladies refuse to ride with the Game.

I THINK it was the morning after New-Year's that I caught Wash regarding me with a kind of imploring, regretful look, which made me a little uneasy. It nettled me too. A little after, I heard him studiously clearing his throat with the general intonation of a man about to offer prayer, or "address the mourners."

I paid no attention to him. I had a scurvy suspicion that he wanted to borrow money, — "twenty dollars;" that being the usual form of petition.

I utterly misjudged him.

"Raed," he began at last, and with some hesitancy, "I believe I never yet took it upon me to *bore* you with any thing like advice." I replied to the effect that I did not now recall any instance of that sort.

"Just so," said he. "As a rule, I don't believe in it. But, if you'll pardon me, I'm going to depart from the rule, for once" — He paused slightly.

"Drive ahead!" I exclaimed jocularly. "Spit it out!"

"Raed," he resumed, without in the least resenting my irreverent request, "you're driving on a dangerous coast; and my advice is, *Sheer off!*"

"Wash," said I, now on my full dignity, "allow me to ask, Why didn't *you sheer off* when you were on the same coast a month ago?"

Wash blushed in spite of himself.

"Don't presume to think," said I, charging him in his confusion, "that, because you failed to make a harbor, nobody else can."

Wash flared up. "I've had the honor to advise two fools within a month," he muttered; "and hang me if *this* isn't the biggest one of the two!"

"It's no sort of use, Wash," I went on tauntingly, "for you to be giving me wind. I know what you're after. But Miss Kate wants nothing more of you. You haven't a ghost of a chance. . . . But you're welcome to Jule."

Wash went out, and banged the door.

I congratulated myself on having put a very lively flea in his ear.

The idea of that Wash presuming to give me advice — about a lady! 'Twas too much.

Looking back to this time, I beg leave to say that I am now at some loss to account for the self-sufficiency which I felt, and the insolence with which I treated

my best friends. It is singular how the smiles of beauty will breed this sort of stuff in a fellow. Ah, Beauty! thou wert ever a promiscuous scatterer of the *flambeaux* of discord. Such are my sage reflections to-day.

About this time there fell a great quantity of light, damp snow; and we did a smart stroke of business in the fox-hunting line. We were out every day that week (we fellows, I mean), and ran down three red foxes and a "cross gray."

And on Saturday we had the *barge* out at eight in the morning, and, riding round to take up our fair companions, drove up beside the swamp. We were nearly always sure of a fox in there. Its cedar-thickets and wide alder-covers were a fastness to which they naturally retreated from their nightly forrays about the farm-houses.

Emery had gone down across with the hounds: we had latterly made him our huntsman. As we came up the road from the direction of the Sylvesters', we heard the dogs in full cry far up the swamp. 'Twas downright cheery.

"Found one so quick!" exclaimed Kit.

Tom set the horses into a gallop.

A quarter of a mile farther on we espied Emery. He had come out into the road, and was waiting our coming up.

"I found a track; and I've put 'em on it," he reported to Kit as we pulled up beside him. "But I don't think it is a fox-track."

"Not a fox-track?" said Tom Edwards.

"It looked too big for a fox," Emery explained. "And the prints are rather nearer together: they aren't made like a fox, either. I didn't know what to do about putting them on it. I never saw just such a track before. But finally I thought I'd put 'em on. I can run on up the road and take them off, though, if you say so. They're still in the swamp, doubling. It's about the crookedest trail I ever beat for."

"Let 'em run; let 'em run!" cried Wash. "I should like to find out what it is."

"Yes, let them go," said Kit.

Emery was taken up; and we drove leisurely on as the hounds worked gradually up the swamp. We felt not a little curious as to the sort of game we had started.

Kit and young Edwards very likely had an idea what it was; but they said nothing.

Miss Nell felt sure it must be a bear; but Emery declared that it was too small for a bear-track.

"Oh, dear! I hope it is not one of those dreadful creatures we had such a fearful adventure with on the lake two years ago last summer!" cried Miss Kate. "If it is, let's not chase it, for pity's sake!"

Kit and Tom began to laugh at the reminiscence thus recalled.

"I think I never heard of that, Miss Kate," I said.

"Nor I," said Wade.

"Tell us of that!" exclaimed Wash.

"Dear me, no!" protested Kate. "I can't even bear to think of it, much less relate it. I never was so frightened in my whole life; and it makes me chill now to hear it spoken of."

Said Wash, "You excite my curiosity beyond all bounds. Miss Edwards, you must positively tell us of that!"

"I wouldn't dare to try!" she exclaimed. "I never should get through it coherently. — Kit, you tell them all about it, please."

"I think they would much rather hear it from you, Kate," said Kit, laughing.

"Of course, of course!" we all chimed in.

"No, no, no, no, no, no!" persisted Miss Kate. "I never could tell it straight! You *shall* tell them, Kit! Begin quick — now!"

"Yes, you tell it, Kit," said Miss Nell.

"Well," said Kit, "it *was* quite a scarey adventure, as Kate says. You see, we were out on the lake in a boat one evening. It was in August, along the first of the month. There was Tom here, and Nell and Kate and Addison — Kate's older brother" (with a bow to Miss Kate) — "and myself.

"It was about nine o'clock. The twilight had nearly faded out. Over the dark hemlock-ridges to the eastward there began to glow faintly the light of the still hidden moon; but it had not yet touched the lake, which lay still, and black as ink. Every thing seemed to have gone to sleep, — every thing save the loons, sailing along in the darkness, and now and then waking the echoes with their clear alto cries. We had just passed a small island covered with low pines, and were a mile, perhaps, from the high, dark shore along the head of the lake, when Nell, who was sitting in the bow, dabbling her hands in the warm waters, suddenly sat up, and, listening a moment, cried out, —

“‘Don’t you hear that noise? Wait a moment. Now hark!’

“We listened intently. A faint *paddling* was just audible, which seemed to be ahead of us some little distance, — a hundred yards, perhaps.

“I thought it was nothing but a loon.

“‘Oh, a loon never makes a noise like that, swimming!’ said Add. ‘It’s some animal, — a muskrat, perhaps.’

“‘Or it may be an otter,’ Tom said. ‘I’ll bet it is one. He was probably down at that little island, but, when he saw us coming up, took off for the shore.’

“‘He’s got a long way to swim,’ Nell said.

“‘Let’s chase him!’ exclaimed Tom: ‘we may over-haul him.’

“‘Agreed!’

“Tom and Add bent to it at the oars; while I climbed back into the stern, and added considerable to the speed by sculling. On we went at a great rate. Just then the moon began to poke its bright face up over the ridge, making it much lighter.

“‘Ah! we’re gaining on him!’ Kate said from the bow. ‘I can see something black up there, paddling along, — his head, I suppose. Poor fellow! how he’s working to get away!’

“‘How near is he?’ asked Add.

“‘Why, I can see his ears!’ exclaimed Nell. ‘How they stick up! And oh, my! what a great head!’

“‘A great head!’ exclaimed Tom, looking hastily around.

“‘Yes, and *such* a great one! Why, it’s as big as

yours! There, he's looking round at us! How his eyes shine! For pity's sake, don't get any nearer!'

"We drew in our oars at this, and turned to take a look ourselves. We had come up within three or four rods of him; and the boat kept driving on after we stopped rowing, it was under such headway.

"'Gracious!' exclaimed Tom, starting up with his oar. 'I should say *head*! That's no otter! Hold on, or we shall be on to him!'

"Hearing the outcry, the creature turned his head again, showing a pair of great yellow eyes blazing with fury, and, seeing us so near, faced about in the water, and came straight for the boat. We all sprang up.

"The girls screamed, and came scrambling back out of the bow. The boat was rocking violently under us: and Tom, striking with all his might at the creature, missed him; and, before he could get his oar up out of the water for another blow, the beast had his claws on the gunwale, and, with a raspy growl, came plump over into the boat. Add and I sprang forward to strike him; the girls screeched, and ran against us: and, somehow, we all went down in a heap on one side; and, the first thing I knew, we were all in the water, splash!

"The boat had upset. I pitched out head-foremost, and went down several feet, still clinging to my oar, and all mixed up with the others. But, being a tolerable swimmer, I knew enough to hold my breath, and in a few moments came to the surface. Nell had also caught hold of the oar, and came up with me, gasping and strangling; and, doing my best to keep the oar afloat, I succeeded in preventing her from going down a

second time. Add and Kate were floundering about near us, but, after sousing once or twice, floated with heads out.

“‘Ugh!’ sighed Miss Kate.

“The next thing to be looked for was the boat. After spilling us, and dipping up quite a quantity of water, it had righted, and lay a rod or two away, the scene of active combat between Tom and the creature, whatever it was. Tom had gone overboard with the rest of us, but had kept hold of the boat, and, paddle in hand, was now trying to board at the bow, in the very teeth of the creature, which stood on the nearest seat, with its back up, spitting and snarling at him.

“The tables were turned. We had been fairly ousted; and now the cat intended to keep possession. There he stood, about the size of a large dog, with his feet all together, and back *beautifully curved*, — just as you’ve seen a house-cat when mad or scared, — in the very poise of jumping at Tom, who still persisted in climbing in.

“Of course, we were not disinterested spectators exactly.

“‘Scat, scat!’ yelled Tom, poking at him with his paddle, with one leg over the *nose* of the boat.

“The creature snarled.

“‘Work him *easy*, Tom!’ I said.

“‘Knock him sidewise with your paddle!’ Add advised.

“But, before Tom could ‘knock him sidewise,’ the creature leaped at him; and over they both went, souse! and down out of sight.

“‘Keep Kate up, if you can!’ cried Add. ‘Now’s

our time!’ and, pushing her along to our oar, he struck out for the stern, reached it with a few strokes, and clambered in. Tom had come up pretty near us, and was swimming for the boat again; and, just at that moment, the cat’s head bobbed up over the gunwale on the other side. But Add had got fairly in, and, snatching up one of the thwarts, pounded him over the head, and belabored his paws across the edge of the rail, till he let go, and swam off.

“Tom now climbed in: the boat was brought round, and the rest of us picked up, — well soaked, of course.

“But, beyond a little red scratch on Tom’s cheek, nobody was *clawed*, or in any way hurt; which, for the peril incurred, was certainly getting out of it as well as could be expected.

“And the water had been so warm, that we were not chilled, nor, saving the unpleasant sensation of wet garments, much the worse for our ducking.

“We could still hear the creature splashing along towards the shore. But we had no desire to try another race with him, and made the best of our way homeward, a far *damp*er, if not wiser, party than when we went out.

“It was no use trying to conceal or smooth over our adventure; we bore too unmistakable evidences of it; and, of course, got well laughed at, as well as pitied.

“I have always supposed that it was a lynx, or a lucivee as the folks round here call them. Grandfather says that these creatures used frequently to be seen swimming in the lake. They like water as well as a dog.”

"Well, that *was* an adventure!" cried Wade.

"No wonder you were frightened, Miss Kate," sympathized Wash.

While Kit had been telling us this, we had come a mile or more along the road bordering the swamp, just keeping pace with the hounds. We could hear them plainly, off three or four hundred yards in the thick growth, threading the thickets, and beating about. The creature, whatever it was, kept in the swamp, doubling like a hare.

Half a mile farther we came to where there were "winter roads" leading off across the cedar-bottoms. Parties were engaged getting out "shingle stuff;" so Tom informed us. Piles of cedar-logs lay beside the main road, along which we were driving; and a yoke of oxen, with white, frosty "whiskers," were chained to a tree beside the road. A little above, a loaded team was waiting just in the edge of the swamp for us to pass, — a rough sled, loaded high with white cleft wood, and drawn by more white-whiskered oxen, whose honest toil had turned to frost along their steaming backs.

"Gee, Buck!" shouted a white-whiskered man of twenty from behind.

The subject bovines tug and strain at their bows to bring the heavy load up into the road.

"Halloo, Dan!" cried Kit. "Sharp, isn't it?"

"Little sharp this morning," says Dan, stamping his moccasoned feet, and glancing curiously at our equipage.

"Another fox?"

Tom explains the uncertainty we are in.

"Bob-cat, perhaps," suggests Dan.

And meanwhile I observe that he casts an admiring glance at Miss Kate, who nods pleasantly to him.

"Back, Buck! Huh, Star, up!" And so we pass him.

But the regular "Ough, ough, ough!" out in the swamp, had suddenly ceased. We listened for some minutes.

"Lost the scent, I guess," muttered Kit.

But, a moment later, there came a long howl.

"Treed him!" shouted Tom; "or else holed him!"

A few rods farther ahead there was another of the "winter roads" leading out into the swamp. Without a further word, Tom whipped up the horses, and plunged into the roughly-beaten trail. The barge bumped over tussocks and old logs only half buried by the snow. The drooping cedar-boughs brushed us overhead. It was a wild dash; but the hounds were calling.

We clung to the sides of the barge and to each other, and went on with the horses at a gallop. Then came a half-open slough; but Tom, now utterly reckless, lashed them through. Mud and water flew; but a tremendous jerk landed us on the other side. On again, "ducking" nimbly to escape the irate branches, which swept us remorselessly.

Then somebody suddenly espied the hounds off in the swamp to the right of us.

"There they are! — there they are!"

There they were, sure enough; but the logging-road did not lead within a dozen rods of the great yellow birch under which we could see them all three standing, looking up, and whining in their eagerness.

The horses were stopped.

We all, save the girls, leaped out. Wash seized upon the rifle. Kit took the shot-gun. Jule volunteered to hold the team. We started out toward the tree as fast as we could wallow through the two feet of snow.

"What sort of a beast can it be?" was Wash's question. And, with eyes in the tree-top, we cautiously drew near.

"Don't see any thing of him," muttered Tom at length. "Nice joke if we've been chasing nothing but a *squirrel* all this time!"

Nice joke indeed. We moved round the birch, keeping off four or five rods from the trunk. Amid the bare branches of the top there was no sign of game crouching. There were now no leaves to give it concealment.

"Nothing at all in the tree!" cried Wash perplexedly, — "not even a squirrel!"

But Kit, who had gone round on the opposite side, espied a hole in the trunk at the but.

"Aha!" he shouted. "*In* the tree, instead of *on* it. Gone *up*, or *down*, inside the trunk."

We closed up. It was a large gnarly orifice, such as one frequently sees near the root of these great birches, big enough to let one of the hounds in.

The trail led directly up to this hole; but the tracks of the dogs had nearly effaced those of the game. Just inside the hole, however, there were visible two foot-prints, showing the marks of claws as large as the palm of one's hand.

There was little doubt that the animal had gone in here.

Kit ventured to look in.

"Gone up," said he. "There's no hole down into the root."

Tom got a dry sapling, and thrust in at the orifice. Momentarily there came a low, fretful growl; at which the hounds burst out afresh.

As nearly as we could make out by the sound, the animal was up fifteen or twenty feet inside the trunk, which seemed to be hollow.

"Have to cut the tree down," Kit observed.

But, as the birch was between three and four feet in diameter, this promised, in view of its gnarls, to be no light task. Besides, we had no axe with us.

"Let's try smoking him," suggested Tom Edwards after some little hesitation. That might do; but we were not very confident of it.

A pile of the dry, roughly-curved bark was pulled off, and thrust into the orifice. A match was produced.

"I don't know about this," objected Kit, with a glance toward the barge, where the girls sat watching us, — a little anxiously, I suspect. "If the smoke *should* bring him out, and we should have a real scrimmage with him here, firing the guns and hallooing, it might scare the horses. They might get the better of Jule. Some of us ought to go stand by them."

I at once volunteered to do so.

I think Mr. Graves had it in mind to offer his services; but I got ahead of him. Hand-to-hand encounters with the wild beasts of the forests were never much to my liking. There was no knowing what sort of a beast there might be up in the tree. One thing was certain:

he had made a good-sized track. On the whole, I thought I should prefer seeing Mr. Graves contend with him, while I protected the ladies. Going hastily back to the barge, I got into the driver's place, and assumed the reins.

"I hope you don't think you can hold 'em if I can't?" quoth Jule ironically.

This was touching me on a tender spot; but I begged her to keep her seat beside me, and so lend me her powerful aid in case I should prove incompetent. She thanked me very much; but she didn't think *that seat* was *wide enough* for both of us.

I begged her to forget the past.

She said she retained a too vivid recollection of it. Then we changed the subject.

I explained the smoking project in a word. Indeed, it needed but little explanation; for a brisk smoke was already curling up around the birch, and we could see the boys standing at a little distance, — Wash and Kit with their guns, the others with clubs. The hounds were yelping, and running about. We could hear the fire crackle plainly. The boys stood quiet and on guard.

For some minutes the animal gave no sign. Then, on a sudden, we heard a harsh snarl from the tree.

"He's coming!" Tom was heard to exclaim.

A rumbling, scrambling noise; and there bobbed out amid the smoke and dust a black creature seemingly as large as one of the hounds. A shout arose. Wash and Kit both fired on the instant. Then the hounds rushed in, and after them the boys.

The horses, rearing and plunging, now took my attention. The girls were screaming, "Oh, oh, oh!" The next I saw of the black creature, it was running almost directly for us, taking long leaps, with the hounds and boys at its heels. Then there was screaming from the barge.

And the screaming stood us in good stead that time; for the beast heard it, and turned aside. Probably it had not noticed the team before; for it instantly swerved to the north, and, entering the "logging-road" a few rods above where we were standing, ran on, following the road, with the hounds close upon it. But it did not run far. The dogs were almost grappling with it at every leap. A hundred yards farther up, it sprang to the trunk of a great hemlock standing close beside the road, and ran up into the thick top with a great scratching and tearing of the rough bark.

As it went up the trunk, Kit, from far behind, let drive the second barrel of the shot-gun; without effect apparently, for the animal instantly disappeared amid the dense boughs of the hemlock-top.

I had started up the horses, and drove on toward the tree, till *implored* not to go "another yard nearer the dreadful creature."

The girls reckoned on nothing less than its eating them all up.

The boys were reconnoitring the hemlock; but so thick were the evergreen-boughs, that nothing could be seen of the game. It had gained a lofty perch, and was keeping quiet. Tom and Wade threw clubs; and Wash fired the rifle twice into the top. Nothing stirred.

"Shall have to cut it down," Kit observed ; and, after some deliberation, Emery was sent out to the main road to borrow an axe of some of the lumbermen.

"You see," explained Kit, coming out to the barge, "the old chap doubled so quick, that we both missed him."

We had seen that something of that sort had happened. "It was very curious," the girls said.

Emery soon made his appearance. He had found an axe sticking in a log beside the road : he hadn't stopped to hunt up the owner. Tom "fastened" upon the axe, and fell to chopping into the hemlock. He soon opened a broad white scarf.

Then Kit took a turn ; then Emery.

Wash and Wade watched the top to give notice if the creature should take a notion to come down on the choppers.

Tom had the last cut. The great tree began to crack and totter.

"Be ready !" cried Wash. Wade had taken the rifle.

The animal felt the motion. It leaped out of the top as the tree fell, and came whirling downward with its paws spread out. Striking into the snow, it turned several somersets, the velocity had been so great.

Wade and Kit both fired at the same moment.

A frightful yell resounded above all the clamor the dogs were making. The wounded beast rose to its feet, and jumped savagely at Tom, who was closing in on him with the axe. But Kit was at hand with the other barrel of the shot-gun, and fired it into the creature's head. Tom paid on with the axe.



Even then it was very loath to die ; and it took a good deal of thorough "pounding" to finish it.

Tom dragged it along to the barge.

Its body was nearly four feet long, but rather slim. The legs were short, with large feet, and very long, sharp claws. The head was rather long than round, with small ears. The tail was long and bushy. In fact, the whole body was shaggy, being covered with long hair of a dull black color.

Tom and Kit pronounced it a "fisher."

The girls eyed it with large-eyed horror. The sight of its unclosed eyes and gory head made them shudder, almost shriek.

"Oh the fearful creature!" quavered Miss Kate. "What *were* such dreadful things created for?"

"To catch hares," suggested Kit ingenuously.

Jule burst out laughing: for her part, she did not "care for it, now it was dead."

But Miss Nell wouldn't believe it was dead, because it had its eyes open; and Miss Elsie felt very sure it would yet "come to life again," and jump at us.

By way of satisfying them, Wash fired another bullet through its head. Upon that they called him a horrid cruel fellow; and they would neither look at him nor the "*poor abused creature* another single moment."

That's what *he* got for trying to quiet their fears.

And "Oh, no-no-no!" they would not let Kit and Tom put it in the hind-part of the barge. They wouldn't ride with the horrid, poor thing! Two bullets through its skull and a dozen buck-shot in its body were no proper guaranty that it wouldn't get up and bite any moment.

So we left Emery to skin it on the spot, and take the skin home across the pastures.

Altogether, this was the most exciting of our barge performances.

CHAPTER XV.

I am betrayed into contradicting St. Paul, and suffer Amatory Decapitation; but am constrained to vindicate Miss Kate. — I also feel the Need of a Change of Air. — Wash and Wade console me with Worldly-minded Philosophy. — We congratulate Mr. Graves, who seems much confused.

THE apostle St. Paul, if I read aright, has repeatedly borne witness in his epistles that the Saviour of mankind "*was in all points tempted as we are.*"

I take conscientious exception to his record. I have read the New-Testament history carefully; and I nowhere find it therein recorded that our Lord (I speak this reverently) ever fell in love, much less "got the mitten;" and I do sincerely esteem it a great human hardship that Christ's earthly experience had not been made to cover these two points.

As a consequence, the sons of Adam are still comfortless on those two essentially human trials. The cross offers no precedent, the gospel no consolation.

There may be those who will consider the above to be strong language; but I do assure them that it does

not half express the writer's feelings during the week following the fisher-hunt. And, lest I be betrayed into stronger and utterly unpardonable language, I beg leave to draw a veil, or rather something as voluminous as the stage-curtain at the Grand Opera-House, over that week. (This latter covering, in fact, would be much more in keeping with its melodramatic character.) Let it be an utter blank.

(The reader to suppose that the victim was quietly shoved into the *guillotine*, and that the axe fell without sticking once.)

It is difficult, very difficult, for a young man to do justice to the young lady who has candidly — albeit as gently as possible — bidden him go about his business. From the beauteous angel of his ardent dreams she is suddenly transformed into a supercilious Gorgon, who has turned his wildly-beating heart to stone. (It is of no use to be frugal of metaphor on themes like this.) But I am in honor bound to do Miss Kate justice: and so, resisting that strong tendency to call her a “fickle jade” and an “arrant flirt” which often sways the great masculine mind at such mortifying junctures, let me discharge the duty briefly; and, that I may discharge it the more briefly, I may be allowed to do so in three single statements: —

1. I am now quite convinced that my court was paid entirely on my own responsibility. The lady did not encourage it. Perhaps she did not repel it: it was not much in her nature to repel. Very likely she enjoyed admiration, as every lady ought.

2. Under the rather peculiar circumstances of the case, I do not see how she could have done better than let matters take their course. I am willing to admit it.

3. She treated me fully as leniently as I deserved. My thanks for the same.

At whatever sacrifice of personal feeling, the above statements shall stand.

But the rebuff was none the less a bitterly hard one. I suppose Wash and Wade had, in their turn, felt much the same: only I am sure that their grief was not nearly as poignant as mine. It is rare that anybody else's sufferings come up to one's own. Under such trials, a change of air and scenery is doubtless beneficial for a young fellow: he often instinctively longs for it. Thus Wash had longed, and, after him, Wade. Biography as well as history is continually repeating itself. That next morning after — after the fall of the axe above hinted at, I was quite determined to leave town without any unnecessary delay. I had not slept so soundly as usual, and, rising rather early, sat down by the window, and engaged in a serious contemplation of the lake.

Presently Wash waked up. He seemed a little surprised to find me stirring.

"Breakfast, is it?" he exclaimed.

"Not yet," said I.

"Oh!" said he. "I thought maybe I had overslept myself." And he yawned.

"Wash," said I, "we've been up here a good while."

"Most eight weeks," remarked Wash. "Had some bully sport!"

"Well — yes," I assented. "But don't you think we had better be getting back to town?"

Something about this simple proposition seemed to strike Wash as peculiar. He stopped short in the middle of a yawn, and, getting immediately up on one elbow, surveyed me attentively. Then he began to grin, then to laugh.

Such levity is always embarrassing.

I observed that I didn't see the joke.

Wash got up in end, and cackled like a great senseless drake.

Wade heard the outcry, and poked in his head at the door. Luckily, Kit had already gone down-stairs.

"Another yachter ashore on that dangerous coast!" Wash bleated out.

Wade eyed me a moment; then he began to cackle. The insensate idiots!

Then they both began to pat me encouragingly on the back. When it comes to *that*, a fellow has either got to slay his tormentors, or take the joke.

"Wants to go home to see his mother, poor little boy!" cried Wash.

It was perfectly maddening. What a pleasure to have cracked their heads!

"You've both been in the same pickle ahead of me!" I retorted.

"Certainly! — of course we have!" cried Wade. "And you're number three!" "*Oho!*" and "*Haw, haw, haw!*"

They were both vastly amused.

"Now we're equal!" exclaimed Wash. "One question, Raed. *Is it Graves?*"

"Graves what?" said I perversely.

"Is it Gravés, — the man what's shelved us? Did she disclose?"

I utterly declined to enter upon the subject. I had no doubt it was the "Freshman."

"That's what I think!" exclaimed Wash.

"So do I," said Wade.

"Confound him!" I could not help muttering.

"Oh, now! none of that, my son!" cried Wash. "No use to sour your stomach with such stuff as that. The time's gone by when one young gentleman could call out another, and stick a rapier in his gizzard, or shoot a bullet through his head. And I am very glad it has. Everybody now has a fair chance in the world with the rest of humanity. If Miss Edwards likes the looks of Graves better than she does us, and honestly prefers him to any one of us, — why, all right, I say. We've nobody to blame but ourselves, anyway. What's the use to growl over it, and sour our minds hating him? All nonsense! He's just as good a right here as we have; and, if he is a better man in Miss Kate's eyes, so much the better for him!"

"Oh! that's all very nice talk for you two now," I said; "but, a month ago, you sung a different tune."

"Admit it; you're right," said Wade. "All very foolish! No use to pipe a fellow's eyes because there are better men in the world than himself."

"We took the chance," remarked Wash. "I knew 'twas a toss-up in the first place. We've lost. The only thing for us to do now is to get out of Graves's way as politely as possible. What's the use to owe him a

grudge? — it would hurt us more than it would him. The best way is to laugh at it, and think no more about it."

"Breakfast!" shouted Kit at the foot of the stairs.

We hurriedly finished dressing, and started downstairs. The Freshman was just coming out of his room into the hall.

"Good-morning, Graves!" saluted Wash. "We *all three* beg leave to congratulate you."

"What!" said Graves uncomprehendingly.

"To congratulate you," repeated Wash. "We are satisfied that you have *won*."

Graves looked a good deal confused and surprised.

"So accept our best wishes," continued Wash; "and may the lady always be happy!"

Graves did not know what to say. Finally he remarked that we were *very obliging*.

"Obliging!" cried Wash. "Of course we are obliging. We've no thoughts of turning green with envy."

All through breakfast, the Freshman seemed a good deal muddled; and he went off to school with doubt and surprise in his face.

At noon I noticed that he had brightened somewhat.

At night he hovered about Miss Kate.

The rest of us kept our distance.

It is pretty hard to meet a young lady who has refused one over night, — meet her in general society, I mean, — and greet her properly. But, thanks to the philosophy with which my comrades had indoctrinated me in the morning, I acquitted myself tolerably well: least I hope I did.

But it does take a good deal of Christianity to carry off a thing of that kind, and not do something foolish. All a fellow's weak points crop out on such an occasion. The chances are that he will make a donkey of himself. Either he will sneak off unbeknown, or else stay and be harsh, or perhaps pert, to the lady. Pert, of all things! As if a pretty girl did not have trouble enough with refusing the purely selfish addresses of a dozen youngsters, without their being pert to her. The young ignoramuses!

CHAPTER XVI.

We go on a Moose-Hunt. — A Thirteen-mile Tramp. — A Logger's Camp. — The Party from Mattawamkeag. — Monson, Jake, and "Louis." — A "Moose-Yard." — "Driving in a Moose." — We *buy* instead of capturing a Moose. — "Breaking" the Animal. — A Novel Sled. — Harnessing a Moose. — We ride Home. — The very Abrupt Departure of the Freshman.

HOW far Kit understood or appreciated the present rather rich *status* of things, I cannot say. Since our conversation in the sitting-room nearly a month previously, he seemed to have determined to notice nothing; but, that he was inwardly astonished and chagrined at the way his three comrades were going on, I somehow inferred. As a result of mature deliberation, perhaps, he now proposed a moose-hunt.

A lumberman coming down to the settlement from a logger's camp in the woods, twenty miles to the northward, had seen two moose on a birch slope to the north of a small lake: whence he inferred that there was, or rather *would be*, a "moose-yard" not far from there as the snow got deeper.

To hunt these moose was Kit's present project.

We hailed the proposal.





Four pairs of rackets (snow-shoes) were purchased of an old basket-maker living near the "store:" and a day was spent by Wash, Wade, and myself, learning to walk on them; Kit being our instructor. It was rather awkward business at first; but we "got the 'hang' of it" after a few preliminary walks, and, the next morning, set off on the hunt. Emery took us up to the end of the road, five miles above the farm, in the barge.

Tom Edwards could not well leave school, especially as this was the last week of the term, and an exhibition was pending.

We carried, in two small baskets, cooked provisions for three days. These, with the two guns and a hatchet, made up our luggage.

Beyond the point where the public way terminated, an unused "winter road" led off to the north-west. This winter road had, a few years previously, been used in conducting lumbering operations thirteen miles above. At its upper terminus, Kit informed us, there was a "logging-camp," where a party had passed the winter of 1867 or 1868. He proposed to follow up this road to the camp, and there pass our first night. This camp he calculated to be about three miles from the lake where the lumberman had seen the moose. In the morning, therefore, we could sally out on the hunt, and either steal upon the yard, or else, in event of startling the animals, chase them with old "Jim" (we had not taken the other two hounds).

After parting from the barge, we proceeded along the winter road, on rackets, at a clumsy pace. It was a mere trail, just wide enough for a loaded sled to be driven

between the great trunks of maple, birch, and hemlock.

Of that thirteen-miles' tramp through this grand old forest, I might, consulting my inclination, fill a chapter; yet, in doing so, I should but intrench upon better description of the same scenery, given by my friend Kit in a previous volume.

All day long we tramped leisurely on, inhaling with the keen air that sense of sombre vastness which the unbroken forest always inspires.

We halted but an hour, a little after noon, for a lunch; yet it was nearly sunset ere we came out in sight of the old log-camp. Greatly to our surprise, there was a smoke arising from the stone chimney.

"Confound it!" muttered Kit. "There's a party in here ahead of us."

"What's it best to do?" questioned Wash.

"Oh, we must make the best of it!" growled Kit. "We must take pot-luck with them to-night. . . . Humph! Isn't this too plaguy bad!"

It was enough to vex the saints, much less a party of amateur hunters.

In no very good humor we tramped up to the door of the shanty. Kit pushed it in.

Three men were sitting round a bit of board set on a bolt of wood, eating a lunch. One of them was a strange, tawny-looking fellow. As Kit pushed the door open, they all three jumped up; and one of them reached for a gun.

"Oh, don't be scared!" shouted Kit. "Don't be so handy with your gun!"

"What's wanted?" one of the men demanded.

Kit told him shortly that we were up there to hunt moose, and had come to the camp to stay over night.

"Well, we're ahead of ye on them moose," said the man, whose name we afterwards learned to be Monson. "We've jest shot one, an' driv' in another."

"Driven it in alive!" exclaimed Wash.

"Yeus, ser."

"Why, where have you put it?" I asked in some astonishment.

"Wal, that's none of yer business, youngster," replied the man surlily. But, after a keen look at us, he seemed to think better of his suspicions. "We chucked him into the ox-shed out here," he explained.

A large white-and-tan hound had risen up, growling at us, and, catching sight of Jim outside, dashed out past us. Jim was of a disposition that never declined a fight. They fell upon each other tooth and nail. We all had our hands full to get them apart; and, during the scuffle, we seemed somehow to get better acquainted.

"That's a fine dog o' yourn," remarked Monson when at length the combatants were dragged apart.

Wash returned the compliment.

Then one of the other men, whom his comrades called "Jake," said we had better come in, and that we were welcome to one side of the camp.

The other coppery-looking chap was an Indian,—a "P'nobscot;" so Monson explained to us the next day. He flourished under the kingly name of "Louis,"—*Louis* simply, as independent of surname as a Bourbon. He spoke rather indifferent English, but redeemed that

fault by speaking very little of it. A very silent chap was Louis.

This party were from Mattawamkeag. They had come in here the day before.

It would seem that the lumberman had told others about the moose he had seen.

They had found the yard. There were three moose in it; and they had succeeded in shooting one before the creatures broke out of the yard. Another they had chased with their hound; and, the snow being now nearly four feet deep up here in the woods, they had at length "tuckered" him down, surrounded him, and driven him in to camp ahead of them. Kit informs me that it is no unusual thing to capture moose, and even caribou, in this way. So utterly tired out had the animal become as to offer but slight resistance, when the hunters threw a rope over its antlers, and dragged it into the ox-shed, where they had made it fast.

Moose-hunters generally prefer to "drive in" the game whenever they can; since it saves them the labor of carrying it to camp.

The yard where they had surprised the moose, Monson told us, was of about four acres' extent, with paths, trodden hard, extending all over it. All the shrubbery had been cropped, and many of the trees gnawed bare of their bark.

The above was the substance of our evening's conversation with the hunting-party.

That night we passed on a "shakedown" of spruce-boughs strewn on the "other side" of the log-camp.

Like ourselves, our new acquaintances had brought

their "grub" with them, all cooked, save some salt pork, which they fried next morning, making so villanous a stench of "rank hog," that we were glad to turn out for a whiff of "God's pure oxygen."

Partly lest the hunters should take it amiss, and partly from the lateness of the hour, we had refrained from going out where the moose was the previous evening.

We now curiously approached the "shed," — a rough structure of logs. Jake followed us out.

"Would ye like to see the critter?" said he.

We said we should.

Jake went round to the farther side, and cautiously opened a heavy door of cleated planks. We as cautiously peered in.

A great, black, shaggy, ungainly animal, haltered to a post, made a vault, and struggled ponderously. But its legs were fettered with strong ropes, in such a manner as to prevent its thrashing about. After struggling furiously a few seconds, it cast itself recklessly down on to the floor of the shed, gritting its yellow-white tusches, rolling its eyes about, and giving vent to a loud, hideous bellow. 'Twas truly a savage sight.

"Feels pretty *ramptious* this morning!" exclaimed Jake. "Got over his *tired* a little, ye see."

"What are you going to do with him?" I asked.

"Going to butcher him, of course," replied Jake; "though Monson thinks we may be able to harness him into our sled, and so make him draw the carcass of t'other one down to the settlement. We'd keep holt of the ropes, ye know, and one of us brad him along."

I did not believe they would be able to make him work at all. But Kit said he had heard of such a thing being done, and that he had himself once taken a ride after a moose; some account of which he has kindly written out for the "Notes" to the present narrative.

"Something quar about this 'ere moose," continued Jake. "Look at tham *horns*! They ginerally shed tham in December; but this 'ere one hain't. There's a pair of *horns* for ye!"

The moose's antlers were immensely lofty and branching. I thought they must have measured fully four feet across the top of them. It was certainly about the ugliest, most ungainly brute I had ever beheld. Indeed, I could never have imagined any thing half so enormously awkward.

"What could Nature have been thinking of when she turned out that specimen?" was Wade's comment.

Jake said the animal would weigh eleven hundred. Its fore-legs were considerably longer than its hind-legs, which, together with its lofty antlers, gave it something of the aspect of a camelopard. But any thing like the awful homeliness of its snout and "muffle" could never be imitated, I am confident.

We went in to breakfast, — such as we had.

"It will be rather mortifying to tramp back without any game," Wash remarked; "for, of course, it's of no use for us to go any farther."

There was the silence of general assent.

"This going home empty-handed is what *gets* me!" Wash went on discontentedly. "What will the girls say to us? What will the Freshman say?"

"Don't you suppose we might buy this moose of these chaps?" Wade queried.

"But how could we get him home?" I objected.

"Why couldn't we drive him as well as this Monson?" demanded Wash. "And wouldn't it be sport? Wouldn't the folks stare some?"

It was a very stimulating project. We resolved to buy the moose, if possible; and accordingly went out where Monson and his *confrères* were at work on a sort of rough sled to haul their meat on.

Kit began by asking them how much they expected to get for these moose apiece.

Well, about fifty dollars, they hoped, — somewhere from forty to fifty.

Said Kit, "We will give you forty dollars for the *live* one, and risk it." Monson looked up; then at his fellow-hunters. They nodded. "Done!" said he. And they all seemed very well satisfied as we handed out the money, — ten dollars apiece.

They were honest fellows enough; for they offered, of their own accord, to finish for us the rude sled they were at work on.

This sled was a curiously primitive contrivance. It was nearly twelve feet in length by four in width. The "shoes" were of maple (a sapling split at the heart into halves), the beams of rough spruce, and the cross-bars of ash. It was mainly fastened by means of withs of birch, and notches. The shoes were very wide (five or six inches), to prevent it from cutting into the snow. Two immense thills of horn-beam were fastened to the "roll" in front; and a log, hewn square

on two sides, laid across for a seat, and securely withed in place. A rough fender was extemporized of a few bits of old board lying about the camp.

Meanwhile Kit was making a draught "collar" for the moose. It was nothing less than a maple-crotch, to go, forks down, over the animal's withers, like a hog-yoke, and be confined underneath by withs. To this collar the thills were to be fastened by ropes. Two more ropes, tied halter-wise around the brute's snout, were to be used as reins, — the one passing through the right branch of the antlers, the other through the left.

During the afternoon, we undertook to "break" the animal. After a great deal of snorting and thrashing, we got him out; all seven of us holding on by the various halters with which we had secured him. But the headstrong brute would have broken loose from us, had not his legs been fettered, I am quite sure. Worse still, he would rush at us, "with murder in his eye," full tilt. Finally Monson got out of all patience, and, cutting a pole, laid on to the vicious beast till he whined for quarter.

Then, holding by the halters, we had Louis go behind him with a goad-stick which some teamster had left in the ox-shed, and brad him up; and in this way drove him through the snow up to his belly, back and forth, — by way of "breaking him" to harness. It was rough sport, dangerous enough to be vastly exciting, and, but for its cruelty, amusing.

As it was now too late in the day to return down to the neighborhood with so novel a team, we passed a second night at the camp much as we had passed the first.

I well recollect the bright January morning following, and the struggle we had to "tackle" the moose to the sled. Jake had thrown browse into the shed the evening before; but we could not discover that the animal had eaten any of it. This morning he was sullen and watchful. By the liberal exercise of our united strength, he was dragged out of the shed, and the "collar" put on him. Then came a series of terrific plunges, which were finally restrained by getting one of the halters round a tree-trunk, and *drawing him down*, or rather *up*, to the tree hard and fast. Monson took this opportunity to give the savage brute another "poling."

But it was not without vast difficulties that we got the thills of the sled down over his back, and fastened to the collar, and the reins on to his snout, and through his antlers.

Wash undertook to do the driving with the goad-stick, and, to this intent, took his seat in the middle of the squared log. Kit and I did the *reining*. He held one rope, — the left one, — and sat on the left side of Wash: I held the other, and sat on the right side. By bracing our feet sharply against the roll of the sled, we thought we should be able to hold the moose; but, lest we shouldn't, Wade was stationed on the hind-end of the sled, with rifle loaded and cocked, with orders to shoot him dead in case he was like to get the better of us and run off into the woods.

A running noose was also put around his fore-legs up near his body, and the rope passed through the collar, and trained back over the fender-board. In case he

undertook to bolt, Wash was to drop his goad, and pull on this noose, and, by fettering his legs, throw him down, if possible.

With these beneficent appliances well in hand, Wash essayed to "touch him up." The moose gave a squeal, and went off at a leap, without so much as giving us time to say good-by to our hunter friends; but a peal of boisterous *haw-haws* came hard behind.

By pulling and sawing at the ropes, Kit and I managed to *steer* him into the "winter road." The creature at once began to run in a ponderously unwieldy way, and continued running on for a mile or over; then, all of a sudden, stopped short, and sulked. No amount of spurring would suffice to make him budge an inch. We worked over him half an hour or more.

Finally Kit lighted a roll of birch-bark, and applied the blaze to his stub tail. He couldn't stand that, and started on with a *yerk* that came near unseating us all.

This time we went fully two miles without a halt; then we let him rest fifteen minutes: but we had to start him with the *bark* again. Of course, it was a somewhat cruel method of procedure; but nothing less would answer, and we were bound to make him go.

For the last seven or eight miles the creature would only walk sullenly forward. We had to wallow in the snow, holding on to the reins; for we did not dare to get on our snow-shoes.

It was dusk before we got down into the home neighborhood.

We caught sight of Rhoda's amazed little face at one of the Edwards's windows, however; and Tom overtook

us before we got up to Kit's. He was astonished, and brimming with questions. We did not deem it necessary to tell him that we had obtained the moose by *purchase*; and he took it for granted that we had actually captured him ourselves.

The animal was now so supple that we had no difficulty in getting him out of the thills, and into the pen where the "fox-bait" had spent the last week or two of its life.

While thus engaged, the whole family had come out, — Miss Nell, Miss Wealthy, even "grandmother."

"Where's Graves?" exclaimed Kit.

"Mr. Graves has gone," said Nell.

"Gone!" we all exclaimed. "Where?"

"Gone back to Brunswick," replied Miss Nell.

"Why, school only finished this afternoon!" cried Kit.

"I know it," said Nell. "But he wouldn't stop over night. He closed school early, in time to take the afternoon stage. It was really too bad, I think, — his hurrying off so!"

And the girls fell to wondering at the moose, and asking a hundred questions, some of which we found it rather difficult to answer.

We were astonished at Mr. Graves's abrupt departure. What could it mean? We knew the college term had begun; but certainly there could have been no such pressing haste as this necessary. We had left him apparently enamoured of Miss Kate; and we had concluded he would be in no hurry to leave the neighborhood, even after the school closed. Indeed, there had

been something said of his spending another week with us.

Was it possible that the Freshman had shared defeat with us in his attentions to Miss Kate, and, as a consequence, had felt that unaccountable need of a *change of air* which had so oppressed us each in turn?

It looked a little like that. I felt very curious to know; to see Miss Kate. I think we all did.

After getting the moose into the pen, we set in a tub of water, and threw into the rack a quantity of coarse clover-hay. If he was a sensible moose, he would certainly prefer hay to browse: so we reasoned.

But next morning we found the rack untouched, though the creature had either spilled or drank a part of the water.

Still hoping to suit his tastes, we felled several yellow birches out in the pasture, and, dragging up the tops, nearly filled the pen with the green brush. The sulky fellow would not humor us to eat while we were looking in.

In the afternoon we harnessed him into the "barge," and, all five of us holding hard, took a ride out past the Sylvesters', by way of showing our *catch* to Jule.

Jule was enthusiastic (not to me, but to Wash), and declared we ought to give *her* a ride. Kit promised one early the following week, — as soon as we had got him fairly *broken*.

That evening, Tom and Miss Kate called; but nothing was said of the Freshman, save to incidentally regret his abrupt departure.

I thought Kate even more attractive than ever before:

we were none of us likely to be caught a second time, however. For the first time that winter, Tom escorted his sister home alone. Kit seemed never to think of such a thing.

CHAPTER XVII.

We give our Fair Companions an Invitation to ride behind a "Tame Moose." — We meet the "Morning Stage." — A Mutual Panic. — "Dagon" runs away with us. — A Smash-up. — "Dagon" escapes, after shedding his Antlers. — All Four of us arrested. — "Trial-Justice" Hobbs. — Twenty Dollars and Costs.

THE next day was Sunday, the quiet sabbath of the country. The poor moose had a twenty-four hours' resting-spell; and, being of a class of animals known as "ruminants," he doubtless ruminated — of the bliss of domestication. But Monday must have seriously broken into his ruminations. We had him out betimes.

With the rest from fatigues had come a return of his former seditious behavior. At the first plunge he came uncomfortably near our friend Tom's head with his great fore-hoofs.

More *pole*, well basted in, set him right on that point. But a dangerous roll of his eyes made us so far distrust him, as to post Wade, rifle in hand, in the rear of the "barge," to be ready for emergencies. No occasion for such extreme correction arose, however. We flattered

ourselves that *four* hold of the reins were a little too much for him.

It was, of course, impossible to get a horse-collar over his antlers: besides, his neck was too thick. But an old collar was cut open to go down over his withers, and a pair of large-draught "hames" fitted over it.

All this harnessing had to be done with the utmost caution and dexterity; for it was as much as one's neck was worth to go up in front of him. One thing must be mentioned in his favor, though: he seemed not to have the least idea of kicking. Rearing was his speciality.

Wash named him *Dagon*, from the great god of the Philistines: wherefore, I know not.

We kept Dagon going up and down the most of the time that day; and by night he did seem pretty well broken: though it was still a rather difficult matter to turn him or engineer him at a "forks" of the road; he always wanted to take the wrong *fork*.

The next morning (Tuesday), we gave the girls an invitation to a ride behind our tame moose.

Miss Wealthy declined, without giving reasons.

Miss Nell accepted, with considerable hesitation.

Miss Kate professed to be delighted. She complimented us on our truly Rarey-like accomplishments and wonderful success in taming the wild beasts of the forest; and she was very, very sorry that she was really obliged to "help mother" that day: but, if we met with no accident that day nor the next, she thought she would like to ride with us, if we pleased.

Mrs. Wilbur, like a prudent matron, declined for her daughters.

We went on to the Sylvesters'. Jule was all ready, and waiting for us.

So with Jule and Miss Nell on the back seat, and all five of us boys holding by the reins and ropes, we turned up the road leading along the "swamp," and drove ahead. Dagon at once went into a run. The hard stage-road gave him foothold. Despite its enormous awkwardness, the moose is really a very speedy animal. We fairly flew. A mile was gone over at a regular 2.40 speed; and, the longer he ran, the faster he gathered for it. Miss Nell looked rather wild. Jule was in ecstasies. But we had the creature well in hand; and all would have gone well, I am sure, had we not had the misfortune to meet the morning stage at a place where one of the logging-roads turned off into the swamp.

There were bushes and trees along the stage-road, on both sides; so that we neither saw the stage, nor the stage us, till we were within ten rods. It was simply impossible for us to pull up, or even rein the moose out, he was under such headway.

When the stage people espied us coming, they raised a shout; and the four horses began to dance and snort. The driver reined them out into the deep snow all over. The stage itself tipped down on one side. Everybody on top jumped off the farther side. Despite all our united pulling and sawing at the reins, the moose went plunging on, and, coming alongside the horses, uttered a wild bellow; at which they all squealed from abject terror. Certain ladies inside the stage screamed and screeched. The driver poured out anathemas, and leaped



for his life; and frightened, no doubt, by all this uproar, Dagon took down the logging-road into the swamp, barge and all, like a locomotive leaping an embankment. We all five braced our feet against the fender, and threw our whole weight on the ropes and reins to stop the frantic monster.

Quite in vain. The next instant, one side of the barge struck a tree-trunk beside the trail.

Snap went the traces.

Crash went the fender-board.

Jule and Nell came headlong against us; but we clung to the ropes and reins. The moose whirled partly around: the nooses slipped off his snout. He reared, gnashing his teeth; but *something gave way*. With a snort he bounded off among the cedars. *There lay his mighty antlers* all tangled up in the ropes and reins. *He had shed them* at last.

Was anybody killed? That was the first question.

Baring a few bumps and grazes, nobody was hurt — much.

We gathered ourselves up. The barge was a good deal battered. Farther travel in that was now, of course, out of the question.

Wade and I undertook to see the ladies home by the road. Kit, Tom, and Wash started off across to get the hounds, snow-shoes, and guns, to run down Dagon.

On getting back to the stage-road, our branch of the party found that the stage was gone. A newspaper, a pocket-handkerchief, a brown-paper package of bread and cheese, and a quantity of oats, lay scattered about near the scene of the catastrophe; but we inferred that nothing very serious had befallen.

It was near noon before we got round to the Edwards's — to receive condolence from Miss Kate.

Meanwhile Kit, Wash, and Tom had gone after Dagon, with intent to kill at sight.

We saw no more of them till nine in the evening; when they came back thoroughly tired out. They had chased the moose eight or ten miles, without once getting sight of him; but they had come upon the collar and hames about four miles from the wreck. With these interesting relics and the antlers they were forced to content themselves.

Well, we naturally supposed this was the last of our moose; but, the next morning, along came an ill-favored individual, who immediately announced himself to be a sheriff, and arrested all four of us (Tom was not included in the writ) for "wilfully and maliciously" frightening the stage-horses, thereby obstructing travel on the public highway, &c.

This was decidedly rich.

No help for it. We were that forenoon arraigned before a "trial-justice" (Hobbs, I believe, his name was) up at the hall over the "store," — same place where we had held our *soirée*. This was unmistakably a *matinée*.

We pleaded guilty, of course. It was all true enough. But we made one mistake: we refused to employ a little scurvy-looking lawyer who had offered to be our "counsel." The justice didn't like our independence. Perhaps the man of law was a relative of his. We were fined twenty dollars and costs, — in all, twenty-nine dollars and seventy-eight cents; which we paid, and told them to take it, and snick-up.

Ah, how Miss Kate did rally us on this exploit! It was a source of endless raillery and joke.

This was really the last of our moose. Altogether, he had cost us sixty-nine dollars and seventy-eight cents, besides the broken harness, smashed barge, and the personal peril he had put us in.

To offset all this, we had *his antlers*.

It is my opinion that it won't pay to try to domesticate the moose.

What Dagon's opinion of civilization was, or what sort of a report he bore back to his kindred in the distant forests, might be a matter of interesting conjecture.

CHAPTER XVIII.

High Times at the Edwards's. — *Carpe Diem*. — We start an Opera. — "Romeo and Juliet." — Private Buffoonery. — A Masquerade. — "Hide-and-Seek." — The Old Chest. — Kit and Kate. — Somewhat of a Revelation. — Capt. Mazard's Letter. — The Yacht done. — Adieu to our Lady Friends.

"I saw Esau kissing Kate."

THE next day, or the next day but one, after the moose *fiasco*, the senior Edwardses (*père et mère*) went on a journey to visit relatives in an adjoining county, — according to their annual custom, as we understood.

Tom, Kate, and Rhoda were left to keep house. That meant high carnival for us. 'Twas getting toward the last of our stay in the neighborhood. *Carpe diem*. We seized the opportunity to have a grand "blow out." Every evening till after midnight that mansion resounded to laughter (side-splitting laughter), song, and racket.

With merry care, Kate had turned mirrors to the wall, and put every thing breakable under cover. I never saw a girl who enjoyed a frolic so well. There were a dozen of us, with nobody to say "Whoa!"

A stage was set up in the sitting-room. We were even ambitious enough to start an opera, after successfully performing "Romeo and Juliet" and "Midsummer-Night's Dream;" both more or less abridged, I may add: these, besides purely original efforts at buffoonery and pantaloony on the part of Wash, Kit, and Wade; immensely amusing, because everybody was bound to laugh that week. Laughing was almost spontaneous. The least effort in the comic line would throw every one into convulsions. I never laughed so much in a week.

Then we essayed a masquerade. But the merriest, roaringest, rollickingest game of all was hide-and-seek. Its very juvenile character lent it a charm. We got galore of fun out of it. And an incident connected with one of these hide-and-seek crazes I must not omit to record.

It was an old-fashioned, two-story house, with "legions of rooms," — quaint, dim rooms and closets. One might almost get lost of an evening on the second floor. They did not pretend to keep the rooms up stairs lighted.

At the signal for hiding, we used all to disperse up stairs, up garret, — anywhere not out of the house. Whoever had blinded had then to hunt us up, by moonlight simple, on the second floor and in the garret.

In one of these chambers I had chanced upon what I deemed a famous hiding-place. It was nothing less than a great chest, three or four feet high, such as was used to keep bed-blankets, "puffs," &c., in. It being in the cold season, this chest was now nearly empty, save a few cedary-smelling blankets down in the bottom. Quietly raising the lid, I would slip into this chest. The

lid had a leathern strap tacked to the edge of it to raise it by: I could turn this strap inside, and hold on. Frequently the "seek" would come and try the lid; but, as I held it fast, *he* or *she* would naturally get the impression that the chest was locked; and, as persons do not often lock themselves into chests, my retreat went unchallenged. I may add, however, that I did not venture in here when either Tom or Kate was "seek." They probably knew about the chest.

But I rather enjoyed getting in there when Jule was "seek." It was gratifying to have her rummage twenty minutes, and have to give it up. Then I would quietly make my appearance, to her great bewilderment and disgust.

I think it was the fourth time I had "sold" Jule in the chest: at least I had just whipped into it, and cuddled down on the blankets, when *tramp, tramp*, in came one of the boys, and, pulling out the chest a little from the wall, got down behind it. Scarcely was he ensconced before there was a quick, soft step across the room, a flutter, a rustle over the chest, and a suppressed "*Ah!*" as *she* discovered the lurker behind.

"That you, Kate?" demanded a low voice, — a very familiar one.

"Yes, Kit."

"In here quick, then! Here's room!" he murmured, and pushed the chest out a little farther.

Another rustle, and she was snugly behind the chest. There were cracks in the back-side of it. I took opportunity to get my ear up to one of them.

"Isn't this cosey?" says Kit with an accent quite

ecstatic. "Ah, you dear girl!" *Then there was a kiss — several of them —* and a sigh.

"What a time you must have had of it!" he exclaimed, half in whisper, half aloud. "All my fault too: I might have known *they would all fall in love with you*. . . . And you've been true to me, dearest Kitty, — true as a magnet! What an ordeal I've stupidly put you through! I've been so distressed and mortified about it all! Can you really forgive me?"

Evidently she *was forgiving* him; for there was a softer murmur, and another *seemingly* very sweet kiss.

"They don't dream we're lovers," Kit went on. "They think it's *Graves*."

At this they both fell to laughing *silently*. The idea was apparently a very amusing one; for they laughed, and shook the chest fairly.

I wanted to put my fist out through the side of it.

"They would gibbet me," says Kit, "if they were to find it out!"

And they laughed again immoderately.

"They would be sure to think I had lured them up here on purpose to *come* this joke on them," Kit ran on. "But Heaven knows I never meant nor expected any thing of the sort. But I ought to have *known*! And I've been served right; for, Kitty dear, it was torture for me to see them so attentive to you, even though I knew you was and always would be true to me. . . . But poor Graves! Between us all, we got him into the worst fix. I'm ashamed of my part in the matter, and doubly ashamed of the position I've put you in all along. But, Kate," — Here Jule bounced in, and, running up to the chest, discovered them.

"Seen any thing of that Raedway?" she demanded.

They had not. And all three went out.

Here was a revelation certainly. I felt indignant enough to go after Kit, denounce him publicly, and knock him down.

But, after all, I could not help admitting to myself that I would rather it should be him than the Freshman.

What a ridiculous game we three had played at, though! There! it was just excruciating to think it over! Why hadn't the fellow given us a hint?

During the twenty minutes I meant to let Jule hunt, I had time to think the matter over. From what I had overheard, I concluded that their *engagement*, or whatever they called it, was a kind of secret transaction, of which nobody knew any thing save themselves. They had probably come to an understanding some years ago. Betrothed, doubtless, but had decided to wait and keep *shady* till both had finished their education. Well, that was sensible, — very sensible: still it was a joke on us none the less.

Should I tell Wash and Wade? At first I felt much inclined to do so; but considering the fact that I had come by my information surreptitiously, and that both Kit and the lady wished it to remain a secret, I thought I might as well keep still. Least said, soonest mended, so far as we three rejected suitors were concerned certainly. And then it might make trouble. There was no knowing how Wash and Wade might receive it. Safest, on the whole, to keep quiet. But why had Kit seemed to dislike Graves? Well, that I couldn't tell. Was it possible he had at one time been a little jealous of him?

Lovers are such unreasonable pigs! I do not pretend to have quite fathomed it all. Yet, at the end of about twenty minutes, I got out of that old chest considerably wiser than I had got into it, and, going down stairs, presented myself to Jule's utterly puzzled gaze as innocently as I might.

Well, I have never lisped a word of this; but I now take a quiet satisfaction in putting down the facts in this record.

Two days afterwards we received a letter from Capt. Mazard, stating that the carpenters had finished work on the yacht, and that we had better come on to attend to the furnishing of the saloon and staterooms.

That night we took leave of our fair lady friends. I made it a point to stick by Kit, and allow him no chance to take a tenderer leave of Miss Kate than the rest of us took. So skilful a piece of deception I thought ought to be carried out to the letter.

And now, on the eve of departing on our Old-World cruise, I lay down my pen, merely remarking, that, if we go to Europe and come back *without writing a book*, we shall do better than the most of our countrymen have done for the last decade.

“Three fishers went sailing away to the West,—
Away to the West as the sun went down.”

NOTES ON THE RED FOX (*VULPES FULVUS*).

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CAMPING OUT."

WARY Reynard was one of the earliest and best known of all my wild-wood acquaintances; and, on the whole, I like him best of them all. Every Anglo-American knows that there is something immensely beguiling in the sight of a fox's brush. Reynard is unmistakably the "genius" among the quadrupeds.

I have rarely come across him without being amused at some new trick or shift of his to get out of a scrape.

I recall a very foolish adventure with one. I was going through the woods on my way to visit a "dead-fall" I had made for marten in a spruce-thicket near the top of a neighboring mountain.

Following a little footpath worn by wild creatures, I heard the sharp, cur-like bark of a fox, a short distance above. Guessing that the animal was coming down the path, I stepped aside behind a low fir, and stood still. The fox had not seen me, and, a moment later, came in sight, trotting down the path. He was a fine "woods-

gray," his great brush carried almost on a level with his back.

I stood motionless until just as he came within a yard of the tree behind which I was standing; then I sprang out at him with a shout. Instantly Reynard dropped in a heap on the ground, and lay still; to all appearance, dead. I knew this was a mere dodge; but, happening to think I would like to carry him home alive, I took out a strong leather string from my pocket, and tied his legs securely. Having done this, I left him under the fir to wait my coming back. The wily fellow did not so much as uncloze an eye during the whole operation.

Ten minutes later, I came back. There was no fox under the tree; but the string remained, ragged and broken by his teeth.

One of my first recollections is of the time, when, armed with an old tin-pan and a pestle, I was left to guard a young lamb from the foxes while it fed and gambolled. It was at my early home in Northern Maine, — one of those pioneer clearings on the verge of the wilderness. Ah, how well I remember it! — the long lake in front, winding away among the sombre "black growth," with dark wild peaks on the horizon around.

The lamb had been brought from the town below to be the nucleus of a future flock. Even now I seem to see Reynard's yellow back over the top of the "cradle-knolls," working up toward the lamb, crouching and creeping from stump to stump, with his sharp nose extended, and eyes fixed; getting up in this way within two or three rods to make a dash as quick as thought. All my vigilance and drumming went for nothing. In an unguarded moment, a fox got the lamb.

For years it was impossible to keep a cat. Tabby very naturally wanted to take moonlight walks; and Reynard was sure to snap her up. Finally a friend at Portland sent us a gigantic old Thomas, — the biggest cat he could find in the city, he said. His thought was, that this cat would be a match for any fox. A full account of the battles Tom had with the foxes would fill a volume. Nearly every night, he would be assaulted in the door-yard.

He held his own pretty well, however; and, excepting some ugly bites, he seemed for a long time to be the victor in all fights. But one night there came a dreadful battle. So fierce and protracted was it, that we at length ran out to the rescue. But it was too late. A large red fox had killed poor Tom, and was dragging him off. We reached the battle-ground in time to save the *corpus* only. Next morning, Tom was buried in great sorrow under a poplar near the house. On the following night, however, the foxes dug him up. They were determined to have him, dead or alive.

About thirty rods north of the house, there was an abrupt, ledgy hill, and just at the foot of it a low crag, or rather a rick of huge rocks that had rolled down the side, and lay tumbled together. A crevice between a couple of these led into an inaccessible den behind them. This den, or burrow, was a great place of resort for all the foxes about. Whenever one got belated in his wanderings, or was overtaken by a storm, he would turn in here. Passing this den about ten o'clock on any morning, one was sure to hear a fox snoring inside. They frequently snore while sleeping. Their sleep is very

sound too. This I have always thought rather strange, considering their slyness, and the acuteness of their senses when awake. I have frequently seen them go there; and generally, on approaching, the incoming fox would bark, — a short, sharp yap; and, if the den was already occupied, the inside party would come out, and after mutual civilities, such as tail-waggings, feet-wipings, and perhaps a few playful snaps at each other's cheeks, they would go in together.

Sometimes, though, there would be trouble. The newcomer might be a bad character, — something wrong about him, or perhaps old grudges; and they would fly at each other with the greatest fury, one or the other soon getting the worst of it, and running away. Often, however, after a smart game at cuffs, they would come to terms, make peace, and go in lovingly together.

We tried to catch them in traps there repeatedly, but without success: too cunning for us. And I remember, that, one cloudy afternoon, a fox made a raid into the yard in front of the barn, where the hens were scratching (they were a flock of Bolton Grays we had lately bought), and, seizing chanticleer himself, ran up towards the burrow in the crag. I had seen him from the window, and, catching down the gun, ran out, and, keeping in the bushes on one side, worked up toward the rocks. Getting within ten or twelve rods, I peeped out through the shrubbery.

Instead of one, there were three foxes before the hole; and a great scolding and palaver were going on. The captor of the rooster didn't seem inclined to divide with the other two, who were greatly scandalized at his stingi-

ness. But, after a great deal of *talk*, he concluded to be generous; and, laying down the fowl, they all three fell to devouring it in the greatest harmony.

Hoping, at least, to kill one of them, I blazed away. Quick as a flash, they all dived into their den. I ran up to get the rooster, had got within a yard, and was actually stooping to pick it up, when one of the foxes darted out, grabbed the fowl, and darted in again. I thought that was *cheek*.

Like other sharpers who live by their wits, Reynard is frequently hard put, and often rabidly hungry.

When quite young, I was camping out one night with a boy-neighbor, who, from want of shoes, was barefoot; and, as usual with such youngsters, his feet were very tough, and not particularly clean. It was on the bank of the "thoroughfare," or water-gap, between the lake below where we lived and the lake below that. It was a warm September evening, at the season when mosquitoes have ceased to bite, and the peculiar autumn stillness of the forest is so delightful. The whippoorwills and the night-hawks had gone. Only the wood-cricket were chirruping cheerily under the mossy stones and logs, with an occasional fishy splash out in the stream.

We had sprigged off a "shakedown" of hemlock-boughs, and, being very tired from our long tramp in the woods, had soon gone to sleep, quite heedless of our wild surroundings.

Along in the night I was awakened by a yell from my young comrade with the bare feet. A fox (we got a parting glimpse of him by the light of the waning moon) had come up, and, seizing him by the great-toe, had bitten and chewed it in a most excruciating manner.

If you could only have seen that toe, or any of its mates, you would have thought, as I did at the time, that the fox must have been hungry.

It was no playful bite, either. The poor fellow had a fearfully sore toe for a month afterward. It was feared that it had been a mad fox, and that hydrophobia might ensue; but no such evil result came of it. It was doubtless mere hunger which prompted that sharp grab.

I once came upon a fox, on a bright, sunny day, sound asleep in a clump of low hemlocks. Seeing him coiled up, I thought at first he was dead, he lay so still. So, instead of knocking him on the head, I stepped up, and gave him a slight kick; when up jumped Reynard, and cleared nearly a rod by his first leap away.

We are told, or at least left to infer, in the fable, that foxes love grapes. *Apropos* of that, I recollect my grandfather had a fine lot of tomatoes one fall; and they were getting well ripened and red, when, one night, a fox, or rather a number of foxes, came into the garden, and ate and guawed nearly the whole of them. The soft mould was full of their tracks the next morning.

One afternoon in summer, while at a hay-clearing, or "hay-farm" as such clearings are called, I saw two foxes *take up* a bumble-bees' nest placed in a bunch of dried grass on the ground. I don't know when any little thing has so amused me. They wanted the honey, and yet were mortally averse to getting stung. As often as the enraged bees would dart at them, they would run and dodge and double to avoid the insects, rolling over and over. I thought they killed many of the bees with quick blows from their paws. At any rate, they

succeeded, at last, in their attempt; and then, scratching out the comb, they ate the honey with a great licking of tongues, and switching of tails.

Once while I was watching a fox, which was watching near the *form* of some hares, a large lynx rushed out of a thicket, and charged furiously on Reynard. The onslaught was so unexpected and sudden, that, for a moment, the fox was put at his best paces to keep out of reach of the long claws of his pursuer; but he soon distanced his more clumsy foe, and then, as if in derision, began to dodge him, and double on him. He would keep within a few yards of the lynx, until the animal became so exasperated, that he finally stopped, and began to screech in very rage, — an opportunity I improved, and sent a bullet through him. The fox stared a moment at the smoke of my gun, and scuttled hastily away.

Their sense of smell is, doubtless, very acute. Yet I have known a fox to approach within a yard of me, without evincing the slightest suspicion of my presence; while on another occasion, when attempting to shoot one that was pursued by hounds by lying hidden near the trail they had made in circling around a hill, the fox clearly scented me at a distance of fifty rods, and turned quickly away in another direction.

When chased by hounds, a fox will rarely leave the district in which he is started. In almost every case, he will “circle” about some mountain or hill; going from one to another, and back. It often happens that they are finally run down and captured not twenty rods from the place from which they originally started. This

is one of Reynard's great mistakes, — one that generally costs him his life. A fox will often run a hundred miles before he is overtaken. If, instead of "circling," he would only strike off on one course, and continue in it, no hunter would chase him a hundred miles from home. Fox-hunting would soon lose its charms under such circumstances.

The reason why a fox *circles* may perhaps be found in that curious attraction towards a centre, which constrains all animals, as well as men, to move in circles when frightened or bewildered. Some deem it due to the fox's love for home, — the region where he has lived and ranged. But a fox has, in reality, very little love for home. Like the true, improvident genius he is, Reynard rarely has a burrow, or any fixed abode, to which he regularly resorts. He does not want the trouble of housekeeping.

Late one spring, a party of us boys dug out two litters of young foxes, — seven in all, — and kept them through the summer. After they were two and three months old, they furnished an endless source of amusement by their pranks and quarrels. Foxes are very *short-tempered* creatures. The least provocation will bring on a game of cuffs and bites. These young ones were yellow, almost red on the back, with light gray breasts, black legs, and large prick ears, black on the outside, but almost white within: their noses were very pointed; their tails thick furred, sparsely set with long black hairs.

We kept them in a large pen, covered over; and, on throwing in food, — such as a hare, or leg of mutton, — there would be a tremendous tussle. First one would

grab it; then two more would fasten on it, and pull to get it away from the first. But, on getting possession of the meat, even the risk of losing it would not hinder them from dropping it to fly at the first one to bite him, by way of punishment. While doing this, some of the rest would snatch it from the ground. This would last until they had pulled it piecemeal.

We intended to keep them till November, when the fur would be sufficiently matured for the market; but, early in September, they *broke jail* one night, and escaped.

As foxes grow old, they gradually narrow their range. Instead of running over a whole county, they come to confine their trips to a single township, and finally to a single neighborhood.

A young fox lately in my possession broke his chain one night, and, after a couple of farewell *yaps* under my chamber-window, set off on his travels. As about four feet of his chain was attached to his collar, his track could easily be identified after snow came. A fortnight after he regained his liberty, I heard of him in another town distant twelve miles. Three days later, he was seen not half a mile away. After hanging about several days, he set off in another direction; when I again got news of him fifteen miles off. But a fortnight after this he was captured, from the chain catching between two stones in a double wall, not more than two miles distant from his old kennel. He didn't like a return to stationary habits at all, and bit savagely at first. It was not until he had been subjected to several sound cuffings that he was disposed to recognize the rights of his former master.

Some years since, a neighboring hillside became the residence of a lady fox that seemed inclined to become a regular citizen, and perhaps "gain a residence." She could be easily distinguished from all others, not only on account of her superior size, but from her peculiar color. From the usual yellowish-red, her fur had turned almost white; for the same reason, I suppose, that a person's hair turns gray.

For more than six years she lived steadily at the den in the hillside, and gave all the people of the neighborhood a chance to know something of her habits, and of the manner in which she supplied her larder. Nothing was more common than to see the "old lady" trotting across the fields at nightfall, or, on going out early in the morning, to catch a glimpse of her turning the corner of the barn or shed; for, abandoning the shyness usual to foxes, this one seemed to get tamer on acquaintance, and to make a regular business of picking up old bones and refuse-matter about the farm-houses, together with whatever poultry she could handily come upon.

On account of depredations of this latter sort, the thievish old creature was repeatedly shot at, and, on several occasions, chased to her den. Two strenuous attempts were even made to unearth her,—once with smoke, and again with shovels. The shovelling-party reported, that, after digging in eight or nine feet, they came to where the hole led in between two large rocks, which stopped their farther progress.

Traps were next resorted to; but no skill in baiting, or insidiousness in placing them, proved of the least avail. This "mother of all the foxes," as the folks came

to call her, was fully up to any thing and every thing of this sort; and so it came to be generally understood that the "old fox" was something to be accepted and endured, like droughts and freshets.

As time passed, the venerable creature profited by this tacit acknowledgment of her providential character to wax even bolder than before. Obedient to her traditions, my grandmother kept geese in those days. They had their aquatic accommodations in the shape of a small pond about half a dozen rods below the stable. For the space of three summers, the dear old lady scarcely got a chance to take a single long breath in comfort for the chronic anxiety occasioned by "that fox." Her list of casualties — carefully and correctly kept, I've no doubt — footed up to seven geese and eleven goslings in these three summer campaigns.

The fox would creep up (her butter-colored back just visible over the tops of the cradle-knolls), and sneak from stump to stump to get within ten yards unobserved; then there would be a sudden dash, a sharp squawk, followed by a great quacking and flapping and spattering, through which an experienced observer might detect a *mounted goose* in the background, making off with long leaps in the direction of a certain tall pine-stub on the opposite hillside.

During the seventh spring of the fox's residence among us, she began to lay her neighbors under still heavier contribution. The flocks of sheep, with their young lambs, used to go out upon the bare knolls. Presently numbers of the lambkins began to be missed. Madame Reynard had developed a taste for juvenile mutton.

Boys were set to watch. According to their story, the fox would trot confidently into the flock, select what she wanted, shoulder it, and trot off, adroitly dodging all "bunts" and other like expressions of ovine disapprobation.

This was intolerable. A neighborhood that had borne the loss of its chickens with a grin, and merely scowled when its Thanksgiving turkeys turned up among the missing, or scolded but moderately at the abduction of its geese, wouldn't stand this throttling of its lambs.

I well remember the bright April morning when seven of us boys sallied out to storm the old fox in her lair. We had no need of hounds: the den was well known to us all. We went prepared for a sweaty job, provided with crowbars, picks, and shovels. A glimpse of the great marauder's head in the mouth of the hole told us that she was at home.

We fell to work, and soon cleared away the loose earth which had fallen in since the last party had carried on their excavations. The rocks which had stopped them were no myth. We were all the forenoon digging around and under one of them, which we mined, and blew partially aside with the contents of our powder-horns.

The explosion opened a large gap into the den behind the rocks; and, before the smoke had fairly cleared, the fox leaped out, and, dodging our blows, got past the whole crowd of us. But one of the boys caught up a gun that had been laid in readiness, and, by a lucky shot, laid the old creature low before she had got a hundred feet away. She was by far the largest fox I have ever seen, though gaunt, and poor in flesh. The bones were of very unusual

size. Her teeth were almost entirely gone, — worn out; and her fur, as stated above, bleached nearly to whiteness.

But the den disclosed a greater surprise. On opening it, we heard a queer nuzzling sound, and, in a nice little nest in the farther corner, espied *fourteen* cubs (pups would be a more correct name). They were not over a fortnight old, seemingly. Some of them had scarcely got their eyes open. That they all belonged to one litter, there could be no doubt.

They were distributed around among us, and, with three exceptions, kept till their fur became good the next fall.

Eight of them were red: three were mixed grays.

NOTES ON THE MOOSE (*ALCES AMERICANUS*).

TO one who has never seen a moose-yard, it is indeed a strange, quaint sight. Generally it is situated on the south or south-west slope of some thickly-wooded ridge or mountain, often in the near vicinity of some lake. Here, as the winter snows get deeper, the moose collect in small herds of from three to eight or ten individuals, and commence to browse more closely, in preference to wallowing about: this is what is called "yarding." A moose-yard not unfrequently occupies seventy acres, — from twenty to seventy, according to the number of animals. But during February and March, in seasons when there are great falls of snow, their range is often narrowed down to ten, and even three and four acres. Paths intersect these enclosures in a perfect net-work. All the shrubbery is closely cropped; and small firs five and six feet high are often eaten down to where the boughs are one and two inches in diameter. They sometimes, too, reach up, and peel the bark, and browse as high as eight, and even twelve feet above the ground, rising on their hind-legs, with their fore-feet in the air. The paths are well beaten, and strewn with

ordure. These yards may often be recognized in the summer as well from the ordure as the dead and broken shrubbery. Sometimes, too, a set of antlers may be found lying about where they were shed late in the season.

The favorite winter-food of the moose are the twigs of the fir, the bark of the mountain-ash, also of a species of dwarf maple and the "moose-wood."

In districts where the moose range, small firs may frequently be seen crushed and broken down. Hunters say that the moose do this shortly after shedding their antlers by rubbing their heads against them in order to apply the balsam to the sore and tender places caused by the loosening and falling-off of their horns.

As the snow melts in the spring, the moose leave their winter-haunts, and resort (about the middle of May in Maine) to the swamps, ponds, and rivers, in search of their summer food, which consists of the pond-lily and rush in all their varieties. Here they may be often heard and seen at a distance, wading along the shores, cropping the lily-leaves, and digging for the large roots. Hunters say, that, while feeding on these roots, the moose will sometimes hold its head under water for over a minute at a stretch.

At this season the male and female do not associate together. The female goes apart, seeking the cover of the most impenetrable thickets of fir and spruce, which, from their density, prevent the male from finding them out; for at this season the antlers of the male are very tender, and easily hurt. Here the moose's calves — generally two in number — are brought forth, and secreted

from the old males, which would destroy them at sight.

Toward the latter part of spring the moose sheds its old coat of long rough hair, and is soon covered with short, smooth, fine hair of a dark-brown color. This, however, ere long turns to a jetty black on the back and sides, and gray on the legs.

As summer comes on, the moose frequents the water more and more. In May and the early part of June, they do not often remain in the water for more than twenty or thirty minutes at a time; but, during July and August, they often remain swimming and wading about for hours at once, especially on sultry days and hot nights, as much from the coolness, perhaps, as to free themselves from the torturous swarms of mosquitoes and "moose-flies."

Toward the end of September the moose leaves the lake's shores, and resorts to the high ridges and mountain-sides. The male and female are now found in company. This is the period of combat. They neglect food, and soon become thin. The terrific bellow of the male is now frequently heard. The males also make another noise, which, from its peculiar sound, hunters call "chopping." It is made by striking the jaws together in a singular manner, and resembles the sound of an axe at a distance. They also emit a great variety of strange sounds and cries difficult to describe.

About the first of October they again return to the water, and linger about it till the ice begins to form; when they once more return to the high lands to select their winter-retreats.

The old males and females never yard together; but sometimes young animals of both sexes are found together. The females and calves habitually yard in company; the young animal remaining with the dam one year nearly.

The older males always yard alone; choosing some lonely knoll or mountain-peak, where they live solitary and apart. Indeed, the oldest moose are veritable hermits, avoiding the haunts of other moose, and frequenting some retired little pond or stream. But the younger males are very gregarious.

When startled from a yard in winter, the whole herd will burst forth at one point, and bound off one after the other; stepping so accurately in each other's tracks, that none save an experienced hunter could determine their number.

Several attempts have been made in this State (Maine) to domesticate the moose. A very singular effort of this sort once came under the writer's notice in connection with a rather amusing adventure. In company with a young gentleman from Bangor, I was on my way from the head of Lake Chesuncook to Greenville, at the head of Moosehead Lake, by what is known as the "winter road," — a trail only used for teams after snow has fallen.

Leaving Morris's Tavern, we were following the trail on foot, with the expectation of spending the evening and night at Woods's, — some fifteen miles below.

It was late in the season, — the last of November. The weather was bitterly cold; the sky leaden and threatening. The white-flecked *Emberiza nivalis* (snow-

bunting), in snowy flocks, with their faint, desolate note, flitted and chirped before us, telling of winter that must soon follow. By noon the snow began to fall. Lake, mountain, and forest raised a dreary moan as the north-east wind, sweeping down from the bleak Katahdin rocks, bore on the storm.

Greater landscape dreariness can scarcely be imagined than that presented by the whole face of the country about us. The leaves lay bedded brown and dank by the autumnal rains; while through the bare, cold branches of the forest, which closed in on both sides of the trail, the fine icy snow came sifting down, and rattled inclemently on the dead leaves.

About three o'clock we crossed Ragged Stream, and, an hour later, sighted Woods's tavern-shanty. But alas for our visions of warmth and supper! An inhospitable shingle nailed to the door announced in pitiless *red chalk*, that, in consequence of Woods's absence, the tavern would remain closed "till day after to-morrow." Being without date, the information was liable to misconstruction; but the barred door was conclusive. We went on to the barn, only to find it padlocked. My companion was shivering in the blast.

"No help for it!" exclaimed he. "We must go on to Ford's."

Ford's Tavern was about sixteen miles below. A rather dismal prospect, with night at hand, and the storm increasing about us.

We had gone two miles, perhaps, tramping on in silence, the snow creaking and cracking under our feet, when my companion (Mr. R. P. Smart) suddenly stopped.

"Don't you smell smoke?" he said.

It seemed to me that I did. Going on a few rods, another very distinct whiff of smoke, apparently from burning pine-knots, reached us.

"There's either a camp or a house not far off," declared Smart. "It is to the windward too, — somewhere to the left of us."

On examining the bushes at the side of the road for a few rods, we discovered what, by daylight, would have seemed a branch-trail, leading off into the mixed growth. The odor of smoke became still more distinct as we followed this trail in from the road; and, at a distance of a hundred yards, we came abruptly in front of a dark, mound-like structure, built under the shelter of a clump of large pines.

"Wigwam! I believe my soul it's a wigwam!" muttered Smart.

"Then we had better go back," I said, as a vision of papposes, fleas, and filthy smoke-stench, rose in imagination.

"Let's see what is here, at any rate," said Smart; and, raising the stock of his gun, he knocked at what seemed a door. It was three rough boards cleated together.

The howl of a hound responded, followed by indistinct human sounds.

"Halloo!" shouted Smart, pulling aside the door, which disclosed a shaggy curtain of black bear-skin within. "Halloo, halloo!"

The dog bayed; and a gruff voice bade him "Git out!"

Then the bear-skin was pulled aside; and a rough, grizzled head, with a "goblin eye," looked wolfishly out.

"Who are you? what do you want?" was demanded shortly, and in plain English.

Smart explained briefly. The head eyed us a moment. I expected nothing less than a peremptory order to *vamose*. But the bear-skin was lifted.

"Come in!" said the head gruffly.

We edged in. Inside the hut was complete blackness; but I felt a big, cold nose thrust into my hand, and heard a great snuffing up and down my legs. There was a scraping sound, as of a poker; and the glow of coals began to light up the room, showing a strange-looking man, clad in deer-skins, bending over the fire, and a big hound standing between us and his master.

Splinters were thrown on the coals. The blaze showed the log-sides and pole-roof of a shanty of the most primitive design. It was hung round with snowshoes, moose-antlers, bear-skins, and white-ash basket-stuff. Several squared sections of logs served as chairs. We ventured to take possession of two of them. The old chap stared at us a while in more than Indian silence.

"Had any supper?" he at length growled.

We stated our case: whereupon he brought us some cold meat—the flesh of a caribou, I thought—on a piece of rough board. It looked as if it had been cut up with an axe, and had very much the appearance of soap-grease. We accepted his hospitality, however, and,

holding the board between us, proceeded to eat the meat. It tasted much better than it looked.

After we had eaten it, we went to the door, and took a few mouthfuls of snow by way of drink. While this was going on, our entertainer sat tossing splinters on the fire to keep up the blaze. This was clearly for our benefit; for, as soon as we had finished eating, he carefully raked up the fire, and then lay down on a rick of hemlock which extended along the back-side of the wigwam.

Not a word was said. Our host seemed a veritable graduate of the Academy of Silence. Smart and I lay back upon the hemlock. I really wanted to talk, or at least whisper, but could not bring myself to break the stillness. And so we went to sleep.

A scraping of the poker on the stones of the hearth awoke me. Our friend of the deer-skins was evidently up, kindling his fire. It was still dark. I wondered whether it was morning, or whether the strange old fellow was about to enter on some nocturnal orgies.

This question was soon settled by his going to the entrance to pull back the bear-skin, and push aside the door. Instantly the full light of day streamed in. The wigwam was windowless.

Smart arose, blinking in the sudden light. I went to the door. The snow lay to the depth of several inches; but the storm had abated somewhat, and the wind had lulled. I was looking out, and thinking of the long tramp before us, when Smart touched my arm.

Looking round, I saw the old man standing near by with another board of meat. Winking hard to keep

sober, we received the ration. Though of rather forbidding appearance, it was substantial food, and not to be refused at the opening of a long tramp. While we were eating, the strange old fellow took down a leg of roast venison from the wall, and, with a butcher-knife that had been thrust into the log beside it, slashed off several slices. With this he fed the dog; and, while doing it, I saw him throw a single piece into his own mouth. This he swallowed almost as quickly as the hound could have done; and it was all the breakfast I saw him take.

To have thanked him for either the meat or the lodging would have been so clearly uncalled for and out of place, that we did not venture on it.

After finishing our breakfast, we set down the board, and prepared to leave the hut.

"Hold on!" our entertainer exclaimed in a voice, that, considering the previous silence, seemed rather startling.

We faced about with a movement very much like a jump.

"You can ride: I'm going your way," said he.

"Ride!" we both exclaimed.

"Yes," grimly, "if you'll hold on, and help tackle."

We told him that we would try to do both, and should also be very thankful for the favor. Thereupon he drew over his head and ears a sort of fur cowl of black skin, and went out. We followed. He led the way back among the pines for ten or a dozen rods. Suddenly Smart caught my arm. "Look there! A moose, as I'm a sinner!"

A few yards away stood a large, full-grown moose, near the trunk of a birch. We both stopped in amazement, regretting that our guns were back in the shanty. But, to our still greater astonishment, the old man walked directly up to the animal.

"Whoa, Tike!" he shouted as the huge creature reared, and struck at him with its fore-feet.

"Tied!" exclaimed Smart.

I now saw that a great thong of raw hide ran from the animal's neck to a tree-trunk.

"Whoa, whoa, Tike!" exclaimed his master as the beast continued to strike ponderously, and gnash its yellow-white tusks. "Whoa, whoa!"

But Tike was ugly, and wouldn't whoa. His nostrils quivered, and his eyes glared with fierce rage.

"Ah!" growled the old man, "forgot yesterday so soon, have ye? I'll tame ye!"

Saying this, he seized a heavy pole of green' black ash that stood against a tree, and began beating the creature with might and main. It was a strange and a savage sight. Smart did not think best to interfere; and I could but look on in wonder, and at a distance.

The great animal reared and plunged and snorted, uttering each moment most hideous whines and brayings. The man — if man he could be called — darted from side to side, striking him furiously with the pole.

At length the brute leaned sullenly against the tree like a contrary mule, neither stirring nor whining. His master then began to prod him, and bore the end of the pole between his ribs, till, unable to hold out longer, the conquered beast whined out his submission.

"There!" exclaimed our host, throwing down the pole: "he's gin in. Now we'll tackle him."

He then went to a tree a few rods away, and turned down a large sled which had stood against it.

We had already surmised that the moose and sled were to furnish the combination out of which we were to get our ride, and made haste to assist in dragging the sled along toward the moose. The man then took from a limb a number of thick, strong thongs of green hide. These he threw upon the sled, and — quite fearlessly, we thought — untied the moose's halter, and backed the huge creature up to the forward-end of the sled.

"Now hold the halter," said he.

Smart and I approached, and cautiously held the thong that was around his neck.

The old fellow then turned over the broad thills, and slipped on his skin-harness. This done, he took the pole, and, brandishing it in a fierce manner before the moose's eyes, told him repeatedly to "See that!" and "See there, you, Tike!"

After this prophetic castigation, several longer thongs were tied into holes in the moose's antlers, to be used for reins; and he was driven along to the door of the shanty. The man then seated himself on the front part, with his feet braced, and the reins drawn tight. We got on behind him with our guns.

"Hold hard!" said he.

We clutched at the bars, but not a moment too soon; for, at that instant, our singular driver gave the moose a sweeping blow with a long birch-sapling, which stood in one of the stake-holes like a whip in its socket.

With a bound and a jerk which came near taking every thing by the board, the moose sprang away.

One who has never seen a moose run can get no idea of the tremendous "yanks" with which we were carried along. We held to the sled frantically for dear life. The "cradle-knolls" along the road-way had never been levelled: old logs and stones abounded.

Over such a track we were borne (I understate it, I honestly believe) at the rate of a mile in two minutes. Sometimes the sled was two feet from the ground, sometimes four, and several times on a level with the moose's back, who was clearing ten yards at a plunge.

The animal ran with the enormous awkwardness of its species, taking fifteen and twenty feet at each unwieldy bound, and discharging volleys of "snowballs" from its hoofs at every leap. Had the snow been damp, we should have been literally pelted from the sled. As it was, the snow was thrown up in clots, which, dissolving in the wind, sifted down upon us in showers. Besides this, the hoofs of the moose went through to the ground at every step, and cast up dead leaves, rotten wood, turf, and gravel, miscellaneously; so that, mingled with the snow, a whirlwind of dry leaves flew over us, while small stones and frozen chunks of earth went past our heads in a frightful hail.

The track behind was gouged up, from knoll to knoll, in a series of short ruts; and all the snowy wayside was strewn with leaves, yellow punk, and dirt. If lightning had taken a notion to make a journey along the trail, it might have made a similar track. That any team of

human harnessing ever left any thing resembling it, I greatly doubt.

Amid these terrific bumps and leaps, and shoots on one runner, our venerable teamster, his furs clotted with snow and dead grass, sat with his feet braced against the "roll" of the sled, and the lines drawn so tightly, that his shaggy body scarcely touched the bar on which he made a pretence of sitting. His whole weight was thrown upon the lines to draw down the moose's antlers from their upright attitude; thus raising the creature's nose horizontally with their base.

I remember catching glimpses of its large, bulging glassy eyes over the black shag of its head as we were now and then dashed up to a level with its rump. Every moment I expected the moose would leave the road, and strike off into the forest. It seemed as if the strength of the driver could not hinder him from doing so, should he attempt it.

The moose kept the road, however; and, in an incredibly short time, I saw Ford's on the rising ground ahead. We had come over twelve or thirteen miles in less than forty minutes, I am confident.

About a hundred rods from the tavern, the old man, by dint of hard pulling and sawing of the reins, brought the creature to a stand-still in front of a high, overturned root beside the road; and, somewhat to our astonishment, — for we supposed he was going to Ford's, — he began to turn the moose about.

"Going back?" exclaimed Smart.

"Yes: I don't go near them taverns."

"That's a spirited beast of yours," I ventured to say.

"He does for me," replied the man with a grim smile.

"How did you catch him?" Smart asked.

"Mired him in the bog back of my place; then starved him down."

Smart took out a two-dollar bill.

"Take this for our ride," said he.

The old man looked steadily at him a moment with the *goblin eye*; then gave the moose another cut from the birch-sapling. With a bound and a flurry of snow they were gone.

A young New-Yorker, with whom we are in correspondence on yachting-matters connected with the plan of starting a college steamship* for young gentlemen, has sent us the following exciting adventure with moose in Maine; so graphically described, that we owe him an apology for placing it after our own tamer descriptions. Modesty, quite uncalled for on his part, impels him to withhold his name.

"It was our sixth week in the wilderness, — thirty-nine days since we stood at the head of Moosehead Lake, and saw the little steamer which had set us ashore paddle away on her return voyage to Greenville. Turning northward, we then crossed the narrow portage over to the West Branch of the Penobscot. Thence proceeding down the southern bank to Pine-stream Falls, we had crossed on the rocks and logs, as the water was low, and struck off northward again on our tour into the wild lands.

* See Vol. VI. of this series.

"Fifteen thousand square miles of forest, lake, and stream, were before us. We had entered it feeling much as the earlier voyagers on the ocean must have felt. Before us and around us, on every side, there stretched away an unexplored wilderness; and every day disclosed some new wonder of scenery in that endless diversity of lakes in their black spruce-setting which only Northern Maine can boast.

"To understand the novelty and the enchantment of the region, the tourist must go there, — wander on, as our little party of five did, from nameless lake to nameless lake, and, guided only by our faithful compass and the constant sun, traverse unbroken forests, and encamp on dashing streams that had never before mirrored a civilized face.

"I cannot tell the name of the sheet of water upon which we were encamped on the evening of my story. I do not know that it has a name; though it would be indeed singular if the all-observing eye of the Indian had not detected some peculiarity by means of which to distinguish it among his dusky brothers. It was the thirteenth sheet of water we had passed since leaving the West Branch, if my account was correct; and was a long, irregular expanse, with the gray, precipitous face of a high granite mountain overhanging its opposite shore at a distance of a mile or more.

"The evening was chilly, as late September evenings generally are in latitudes so high ($46^{\circ} 43' N.$). Our camp-fire felt very comfortable: we had built it a few rods up from the water to avoid the dampness.

"A clump of thick-set firs sheltered us on three sides.

We had just finished a roast haunch of caribou, and lay stretched out on shake-downs of balsam-boughs, with our feet to the blaze, looking out on the lake and the dark-shaded mountain opposite, the black outline of which seemed engraved in the sky, already silvered with the rising moon. As we chatted, the broad red disk loomed suddenly up, and a long glittering line traced its path across the lake.

"Hitherto the woods had been still as the shadows that rested over them; but the rising of the moon seemed to rouse all the nocturnal prowlers. Cries from near and far began to be heard. These were replied to by answering cries, as raccoons, bears, and lynxes bestirred their slumbers, and sallied out for a busy night.

"The dogs pricked up their ears, and listened with gruff little barks, looking off into the dim moonlit scene, with an occasional servile look toward us, waiting for a nod of permission to race off after their hereditary enemies the wild-cats.

"'Romantic, isn't it?' said young Spriggs, sitting up, and holding the toes of his moccasins in his hands.

"'Romantic? Yes; it's more than that,' said Nimms, the Cambridge boy. 'It's utterly savage!'

"'Not the place for the evening paper, is it?' said Rowe.

"'Really,' exclaimed Spriggs, 'I had quite forgotten there was such a thing. But it's wonderful how much a fellow can forget in six weeks.'

"'It does look as if one might relapse into barbarism or monkeyism. Just see how naturally and ape-like Spriggs squats on the ground there! He takes to his ancestral habits as naturally as Darwin could wish.'

“‘I deny it!’ exclaimed Spriggs, straightening up. ‘That’s a very fair illustration of the slight grounds on which you scientific fellows build a theory.’

“Just as Nimms was about to reply, another voice was heard; and a very extraordinary one it was. It seemed a sort of mixture of the bellow of an ox and the whine of a camel (about as much of one as the other); so loud, that it fairly drowned out Nimms’s exclamation of surprise; though evidently the creature that made it was some little distance back in the woods. We all jumped up: the dogs growled.

“‘What in the world is that?’ exclaimed Melcher.

“‘Hark!’

“There followed a great snapping and crashing of brush, accompanied by a strange clattering sound. The dogs fairly howled in their excitement.

“The noise out in the forest increased: a whole company of cavalry could hardly have made a greater racket, and smashing of the bushes. We stood staring at each other, and listening with apprehensive astonishment. Suddenly the curious bellowing was repeated once, twice, thrice; and then another took it up. Such sounds! It would be impossible to give the reader any idea of them on paper. In addition to their unearthly loudness, there was a frightful, guttural intonation, as of fierce anger.

“‘It’s some sort of a fight!’ whispered Rowe. ‘Where did we set those guns? Are they all loaded?’

“There was a general scramble to arms. The noise in the brush continued, with a heavy stamping and jar of the ground, which came nearer, followed by a nearer bellow.

“‘They are coming this way, sure!’ muttered Nimms. ‘Be ready for them!’

“We hastily cocked our guns, and stood prepared to shoot. The fir-thicket back of our fire rustled and shook as the huge creatures — whatever they were — rushed through it; but instead of coming in upon our camp, as we expected, they seemed to sheer to the right, and went down to the water some fifteen rods above us. Bounding from the bank into the lake with heavy splashes, they swam out into view with plunges and a great spattering of the water. We were now able to see two black heads, one behind the other.

“‘They can’t be bears,’ said Spriggs; ‘for they are too large, and the creatures make too great a racket.’

“‘And too great a bellowing, I should imagine,’ said Melcher, laughing. ‘But we can find out, I guess, by looking at the tracks. Light some torches.’

“A pitch-pine knot, with a stick thrust into its hollow end, was lighted at the fire; and we left the camp to examine the trail. Following along the shore to the place where the animals had jumped into the water, we there found the sand and mud thrown up. Melcher had the torch.

“‘Hoofs!’ exclaimed he, holding it down.

“‘Ah! they were moose, then!’ cried Nimms.

“‘That’s just it,’ said Rowe. ‘But what could they have been doing, making such a din and roaring? Now I think of it, it must have been their antlers that made the clattering. They were fighting.’

“‘Let me see. September? Why, this is the season when the moose-stags don’t love each other, or are jealous

of the favor of their sweethearts, and fight like "green-eyed Spaniards," said Spriggs. 'Those were a couple of stags fighting.'

"'But moose are generally very shy,' said I. 'They would have smelled our fire a mile off, and heard us talking too.'

"'Yes; but, during the latter part of September and October, the stags grow savage, and care for nothing,' said Spriggs. 'They are deaf and blind to every thing but fighting off rivals. An old river-driver on the Penobscot told me that one stag would fight another, and chase him off twenty miles sometimes, and that they often kill each other in these encounters.'

"'There was now no doubt that these were moose that had passed us. We could still hear them swimming far out in the lake.

"'Well, they are making a straight line for the other shore,' said Melcher. 'They are only illustrating the old feudal principle: might makes right on their domains. The weaker must submit, or take himself out of the way, whether he is the lawful possessor or not.'

"'But won't the stronger one be likely to come back?' said Rowe. 'The cow-moose — the *fair one* who has been the cause of this battle — has probably been left in the woods behind us.'

"'There's a natural inference for you,' said Spriggs. 'If the "brave deserve the fair," and win them by force of muscle, of course they seek their reward in the bright eyes of their charmers. That being the case, that stag will come back to enjoy the fruits of his hard-won battles. We can do no better than to wait for his return, and offer our congratulations.'

"As he was speaking, a hoarse bellowing came from the other shore.

"'They are having another set-to over there, I guess,' said Nimms. 'Suppose we make an ambuscade for the survivor, as Spriggs suggests. We can make ourselves comfortable in that little clump of hemlocks up there, and take turns watching for this ardent lover. There will be no difficulty in hearing him as he swims across the lake.'

"Rowe and Melcher went back to put out the fire; while Nimms, Spriggs, and I tore off a mass of green boughs for a bed.

"'It won't pay for all of us to keep awake,' said Nimms. 'I'll watch an hour, and then wake Spriggs. He can practise for an hour in learning how to keep his eyes open, and then wake you.'

"In a few minutes, Melcher and Rowe came with the rubber-blankets; and we called in the dogs, and tied them with withs.

"I was soon asleep, and knew no more till Spriggs woke me to take my hour of watching. It was very dark, and had grown foggy and damp. The wind was fresh from the lake, and seemed laden with rank, mucky smells.

"'No signs of the moose yet,' said Spriggs. 'But watch an hour, and then wake Melcher.'

"It was too dark to watch; but I could listen. Sitting on a log, with my gun in readiness, I passed my hour without hearing any sounds, save the clear alto-call of the great Northern diver, and an occasional screech from some prowling lynx. I came near going to sleep at my

post, but finally roused enough to stir up Melcher and creep into his nest.

"It was daybreak before my turn came again. I had got well rested.

" 'We've had our watching for nothing,' said Spriggs. 'The old fellow isn't so ardent in his affections as we supposed, or else he's gone another way.'

"The fog still rested darkly on the water; but high over it to the eastward the gray light of dawn had begun to show. Gradually the trees took shape out of the blackness. A flock of ducks (wood-ducks) came whirring out of the fog from the other shore; and just then I detected a paddling sound. It might be the moose just starting off from the opposite bank, or it might be a musk-rat only a few rods away. I couldn't tell, and so waited, listening so absorbedly, that I scarcely noticed a cracking of the twigs in the woods behind us, thinking it was nothing more than a bevy of hares tearing along.

"Just then, however, a deep snort, followed by a growl from one of the dogs, caught my ear; and, turning hastily, I saw a large female moose a few rods back among the spruces, staring with great round eyes at the low hemlock, in the shadow of which I stood.

"It occurred to me in a moment that the cow-moose had followed on after the contending stags, and come upon us unexpectedly: so, raising my gun, I fired on the instant full at the great animal's front. The unwieldy creature turned with a rearing bound, and a cry not altogether unlike the squeal of a horse. Those who have heard the more painful cry of the horse when wounded on the battle-field can gain a better idea of the sound.

The cry was answered or echoed, I hardly noticed which, from the lake. The boys sprang up at the report, with a general shout of—

“‘What is it?’

“‘Moose!’ I exclaimed, and, catching up Nimms’s loaded gun, ran on in pursuit.

“The others followed not far behind. There was blood on the yellow leaves, and I could hear the moose running off. Hoping to come up near enough for another shot, I ran on as fast as I could, for fully a hundred rods, to where a thick growth of alders bordered a low, swampy tract.

“Spriggs and Melcher were closing in behind me. I could hear the moose floundering through the bog, and pushed in among the alders. On the other side of the alder-border the ground was miry and spongy with moss. A growth of tangled cranberry-bushes was before me; but, stimulated by a glimpse of the moose’s head over them, I struggled in, and tried to wallow over the dense tangles.

“Suddenly two reports rang out from behind, followed by a loud shout from Spriggs. Looking back, I saw the boys running wildly through the alders, and looking behind them.

“‘The moose! the old moose-stag!’ shouted Spriggs, throwing himself among the cranberries.

“I did not see what became of the other fellows; for, just as Spriggs dived into the shrubbery, another moose, with prodigious branching antlers, came rushing through the alders, and, seeing me standing partially on the brush, uttered a tremendous bellow, and bounded straight for

me. Its hoofs went down into the mud nearly to its knees, and were pulled out with a loud noise of suction. But this was no obstacle to its progress. Its shaggy hair was dripping with water; blood came from several wounds in its breast and shoulders; its muffle was drawn up, disclosing its great yellow-white tusches; and its eyes had a terrific, bloodshot look.

"The onslaught was so sudden, that I stood staring during the moment I might have fired. Another leap, and the beast was close upon me. Dropping amid the clumps of cranberry, I wriggled in under the brush, and burrowed along like a mole through soft mud and water, stirring up a most fetid stench, and expecting every second to feel the moose's ponderous hoofs come down upon my back. I could hear it plunging in the mud and brush; but all at once there was silence.

"'He's mired!' shouted Melcher.

"I poked up my head. The boys were coming out of the bushes from various directions; and the moose lay floundering and wallowing, up to its huge body in the bog, almost on the same spot I had been standing when he charged on me.

"Finding him fairly caught, we began to close in upon him. Such a picture of baffled rage I never could have imagined. The great brute shook its antlers, plunged and bellowed. The whole forest resounded to his hideous howlings. He seemed perfectly frenzied.

"Spriggs worked round in front of the animal, and, taking careful aim, fired. With a mighty, muscular bound, the great creature threw itself clean out of the mud upon the bushes, and almost instantly died.

"Meanwhile the other moose had floundered through the swamp, and escaped. We did not pursue it. One of the huge animals was enough for us. We had disagreeable work in getting the dead warrior out of the bog, and getting the mud from his hide and from ourselves. My little creeping excursion under the brush had made me especially muddy and yellow; but the 'steaks' we had that morning repaid me.

"The antlers of the stag measured between six and seven feet across the top, and must have weighed fully seventy-five pounds. Spriggs estimated the gross weight of the carcass at thirteen hundred pounds."

Still another instance where a wounded moose has turned upon his hunter was told me only last season.

In one of the lakes of that singular system which form the northern reservoir of the Penobscot River, there is, at a distance of twenty yards from the shore, a large boulder, or ledge, of a curiously white, limy appearance.

Passing it last September in company with an old hunter named Clives, who has spent the most of his life in this wild region, I alluded to its singular shape and color.

"Yes," said the old man: "cur'us rock. I've named it too."

"Named it? What do you call it, pray?" I asked.

"I call it 'Moose Rock.'"

"Why Moose Rock?"

"Well," said the old fellow, setting the butt of his gun down into the white sand, and leaning with folded arms upon the muzzle, "I'll tell ye. About twenty years ago, I came in through here, one fall, after beaver."

"Were there beaver here?" I interrupted craftily.

"Yes, sir-ee. Twenty years ago, there were. I shot seventeen that year on the streams around here."

"I suppose they are all gone now," I rejoined.

"Well, mostly. Folks think so. But, between you and me, I know of two or three streams in this State where new houses are built every season."

"I presume you wouldn't care to tell a fellow where those streams are, would you?" I ventured.

"Not particular about it," said the old chap. "As I was saying, I had come in here after beaver, and built a camp on a stream about six miles from here. I had only brought up salt and powder (depended on game entirely for food); and one afternoon, after finishing the last quarter of deer-meat for my dinner, I loaded up my gun, and started out to look up a fresh supply.

"But, somehow, there wasn't any thing in sight that day. There are some such days, when you can't get your eye on a thing. Woods will be as still as if they were deserted. Go through the next day, and you will see deer or partridges at every step. I had come from my camp clean over to the shore of the lake here without seeing any thing bigger than a squirrel. I was just a-going to cut a pole, and go to fishing for lake-trout, when I thought I heard a crackling off to the right there. I stopped and harked. Pretty quick I heard it again, and felt sure that some creature was coming along among the bushes. So I just curled down behind a log, and waited for it to come out in sight.

"It kept cracking and snapping.

"I began to wonder what it was about; when, seeing

a clump of little moose-woods swaying, I looked sharper, and espied a noble pair of antlers through the leaves. 'Twas a moose, browsing. He had come down to the lake to drink, and was feeding his way along the shore.

"I brought my gun to bear across the log, and, just as the crackling was renewed, managed to cock it without startling him. In a moment more he stepped out in sight, — a tremendous fellow, nine or ten feet high. I took aim straight at his breast, and blazed away.

"The first thing I heard after the report was the most hideous whine you ever heard. It sounded like a howl and bleat together. And such a rearing and smashing among the bushes!

"I began to load as quick as I could; but, before I could get the charge in, the moose started off at a run out into the woods, — not exactly towards me, but off to the right of me. I don't think the creature had seen me at all. Didn't know from what direction he had been hit.

"I shook in the priming, and, clapping down the pancover, ran on after the moose. A little way back from the water there was a thick belt of alders. Diving in among these, I struggled through them; and, on coming out on the other side, there stood the moose. He had faced about, and stood stamping, and grinding his teeth. The moment I came in sight through the brush, he rushed at me with a hideous bellow.

"There wasn't even time to fire a cocked gun. I dodged aside, and tried to skulk off among the alders Indian-fashion; but the moose had his eye well on me,

and came plunging after me so close, that I was glad to dig out on the other side, and jump behind a big bass-wood.

"I had barely got behind it when both the animal's hoofs came down, one on one side of me, the other on the other. 'Twas the narrowest shave I ever had. One hoof hit the barrel of my gun, and knocked it out of my hands quick as a wink. Before the creature could recover itself to rear again, I darted away to another tree, doubled and dodged to another with the moose bounding after me, till I got back to the shore here, the critter coming straight at me, snorting, and grinding his teeth. I had noticed that rock when I came along, and now ran into the water up to my neck, and struck out for it. A few kicks took me across the narrowest part here.

"I scrambled up on to the rock, and turned to see if the moose was coming out. There stood the old varmint in the water up to his breast, shaking his horns like a mad ox. I slunk down on the other side of the rock, with my legs in the water, and ducked my head out of sight. I didn't want to provoke him.

"After crouching there for some minutes, I peeped up. But the moose stood there, eying me grimly. The wound in his breast was bleeding, and had crimsoned the water before him.

"It was now late in the afternoon, and had come in cloudy. The prospect of spending the night on that rock, without any supper, wasn't very pleasant; but there was the moose, with no intention of retiring that I could see.

"A fog began to settle upon the lake. It grew dark rapidly. I gradually drew my legs up out of the water, and sat like a frog squatted together on the top of the rock.

"My wet clothes made me dreadfully chilly and uncomfortable. But through the gloom I could still see the moose, and hear him splash occasionally.

"It at length grew too dark to perceive him, even at a distance of fifty feet; but, all through the evening, I knew by his movements that he was still besieging me.

"Hour after hour went by. Despite the cold and the moose, I fell into a drowse, and kept drowsing and waking alternately. About midnight, as I judged, I heard the moose splashing, and, shortly after, caught the sound of his hoofs in the sand. He had left. A cracking of the brush confirmed it. But I couldn't bring myself to drop into the water in the dark, and so sat there till daybreak.

"As soon as it had got partially light, I swam ashore, and went out to the tree where the moose had reared upon me to find my gun. It lay there just as he had knocked it out of my hands. Going back to the shore, I found the track where the moose had gone away. I resolved to try him once more, and started off on the trail, keeping a cautious lookout ahead.

"In less than half an hour I came in sight of him, eight or ten rods off, standing leaned against a tree. I knew by that he was about done for, and, creeping round on one side, gave him another shot; at which he lurched over, and lay still.

"On going up, I found him quite dead; and from his

appearance, and the wound in his breast, I think he must have been dead, or near it, as he stood against the tree.

“Better believe I wasn’t long cutting out a steak and roasting it.

“And so,” continued the old man, “I named that ledge out there in the water *Moose Rock*.”

THE GRAY WOLVES OF MAINE.

ONE snowy day, while rummaging among Kit's books and papers, we came upon a delicate little MS. carefully tied up with a pink ribbon, and labelled, "Our Wolf-Story."

"Let's open it," Wash suggested with a mischievous wink. Kit, I should add, had gone to the stable.

No sooner said than done.

I hastily read a few pages; and then, hearing him coming back, as hastily slipped it into my breast-pocket. From what I had read, I concluded it might be useful.

A secret perusal afterwards made me resolve to keep hold of it as a thrilling reminiscence of the *heroine* of our record. Once in print, Kit cannot well help himself; and he deserves as good as we can give him for his winter's wickedness. The *appropriated* MS. runneth thusly:—

"It had been a season of drought. The pastures were 'seared,' and all the ploughed fields were like ashes. The long corn-leaves had curled into crisp rolls, and the grasshoppers had stripped the potato-fields till nothing but the pale-green stalks were left.

"But the great wilderness to the northward which stretches off toward Canada presented the most dreary spectacle. Much of it is composed of what lumbermen call 'black growth,' — spruce and hemlock. Myriads of worms had eaten these till the foliage had turned to dull yellow. Thousands of acres looked as if blasted by fire. In passing through the forest, it required both hands to brush away the worms which came swinging down on their webs from the tree-tops to the ground.

"Hunting-parties came back empty-handed. There was no game, they said, — no moose, no deer, and no partridges. In the woods there was an almost painful stillness. Last fall, the forest had echoed to the *chicker* and *chirr* of legions of squirrels, red, gray, and black; but now they were gone — somewhere; starved, perhaps.

"Early in September the corn (what there was of it) was gathered. 'Huskings' were almost a mockery that fall; but the boys would make them, according to custom. One night, about the middle of the month, we were all invited to Zack Davis's, — 'Uncle Zack' we called him. It was a couple of miles to his house. Uncle Zack lived at the end of the road from our house, which, like a river towards its source, dwindled to a mere path through the woods and up the valley.

"Addison Edwards, Tom, and their two sisters Kate and Rhoda, and myself, — five of us, — started about dusk; though the moon, just rising, was beginning to make it quite light.

"There were forty or fifty boys and girls at the gathering. It did not take long to husk the corn. About a bushel of ears apiece would finish it, they said. So, after

husking and a supper of puddings and pumpkin-pies, those who wished to do so were invited to remain for a 'good time' in the long unfinished kitchen. Our party were among the number who *wished*, of course.

"There were all sorts of plays and games, with plenty of song-singing; and it was considerably past midnight when we started homeward. The moon was high in the heavens.

"It was the 'noon of night.' The silvery light rested over all. Beneath it, all the dreariness of the long drought was softened. We sang, as we went down the valley, repetitions of the songs sung in the evening, and listened as the tones were echoed back from the wild sides of the valley.

"About a mile below Uncle Zack's the path left the valley, and crossed an open pasture. We were still singing; when Ad suddenly cried, —

" 'Hark!'

" 'Nothing but a dog,' said Tom, as a cry, which did sound somewhat like the howl of a dog in the night, came to our ears from the ridge to the northward.

"We stopped to listen.

" 'I don't believe it was a dog,' said Ad.

" 'What was it, then?' demanded Tom.

" 'I don't know,' said Ad; 'but it sounded too wild and fierce for a dog.'

"Just then it rang out again, nearer, — a long, wild howl, that seemed to come from the upper edge of the pasture.

" 'I tell you, that's no dog!' cried Ad.

" 'You don't suppose it's wolves, do you?' exclaimed Kate.

“‘Wolves! — no!’ cried Tom. ‘There hasn’t been a wolf seen about here for twenty years.’

“We stood looking up toward the upper side of the pasture. Every stump and bush was plainly to be seen in the bright light.

“Suddenly a dark object, an animal of some sort, came out into the open land, and ran swiftly along the edge of the woods for twenty or thirty rods. Then it stopped; and again we heard the long howl. The woodland echoed to it. Just then the forms of four or five others came into sight in the pasture.

“‘They *are* wolves!’ exclaimed Ad.

“‘Oh, let’s run!’ cried Rhoda, catching Kate’s arm.

“‘Go ahead, girls,’ shouted Tom, ‘as fast as you can for home!’

“They did not need any further urging, but ran like foxes.

“A pile of ‘four-foot wood’ was lying near the path. Some of it was small and round. We each took a stick, and ran after the girls.

“A dozen howls seemed to burst upon the air all at once.

“‘They are after us!’ cried Ad.

“Glancing over my shoulder, I saw the animals — a dark pack of them — rushing down through the pasture in full chase. The moment they saw us run, they had started in pursuit. The still forest rang out afresh with their howls. In a moment more we had overtaken the girls.

“‘What shall we do with *them*?’ panted Tom. ‘We can’t get home — with them.’

"Kate turned round suddenly. 'The Great Rock!' said she breathlessly. 'We're most to it: can't we get upon it?'

"'Run for it, quick!' cried Ad. 'Perhaps so.'

"The 'Great Rock' was a huge boulder,—some would call it a ledge, —flat on the top, but with steep sides. It lay a few rods from the road, on the lower side. We were now nearly opposite it; and, turning out of the path, ran down toward it for dear life. The wolves were close upon us. We could hear them tearing down the hillside, and crashing through the brush.

"'Up, quick, Kate and Rhode!' cried Tom. 'Put your toes into that crevice: I'll help you up!'

"They went up like cats. The top of the rock was nine or ten feet above the ground. There were several cracks and seams in the side. We climbed after them in a hurry, but had barely time to turn round with our clubs before the wolves were at the base of the rock. With wild howls and yells they sprang up its sides, their nails scratching the stone, and their white teeth gleaming in the moonlight.

"One of them obtained a foothold on the edge of one of the seams, and with a second bound came to the top of the rock, his fiery green eyes showing over the edge. We all three struck at his head; and, with a dog-like yell, he fell back to the ground among his enraged fellows, which howled and snapped at him.

"We drew breath again.

"'We can keep them down,' said Tom.

"'Here are stones to throw at them!' cried Kate, gathering up several the size of goose-eggs.

“On the top of the rock was a space, with an uneven surface, as large as a room eighteen by twenty feet in size. Low shrubs, poplar and white-birch, grew on it, rooted partly into the rock, and partly into the mossy soil which had collected there. And sure enough, as Kate had discovered, there were plenty of fragments of the rock lying embedded in the shoal soil.

“Tom and Ad caught up several of them, and threw them with all their strength among the wolves.

“They dodged and yelled like curs when hit; but we couldn’t drive them away. They would slink back a little, and then charge upon the rock the moment we stopped throwing.

“Suddenly one of them ran round to the other side of the rock, and howled. The rest instantly followed as if he had called them. There were no cracks on this side; but the ascent was less abrupt. We stepped hastily across. The moment the wolves saw us, they began to leap towards us, but slipped back on the bare rock, tumbling one over the other.

“When one came within reach, we gave him such a whack with our four-foot sticks as to knock him back to the bottom. But the next instant he would leap up again as fierce and eager as ever. One, a gaunt old male, larger than the others, got his feet upon the top several times. The hardest blows we could deal seemed only to stun him for a moment.

“Finding they could not reach us there, they ran round to the side next to the road again; but, after a few fruitless leaps, they drew back, and sat down just like dogs, and watched us steadily. Several of them

were 'lolling,' with long tongues hanging out; and they all, from time to time, snapped at each other and at their own bodies as if covered with fleas.

"Tom counted them aloud as they sat glaring up at us. 'Eleven,' said he. 'Aren't they a wicked-looking set?'

"There was no disputing that. Hungry and ferocious enough they looked. The girls could not find courage to look at them.

"'Well, what's to be done?'" said Ad, as we stood there with our clubs, ready to meet them in case they made another rush. 'How are we to get home?'

"'We might shout for help,' suggested Tom.

"'We should not be heard,' said Ad. 'The folks at home are all asleep, probably. They wouldn't think of sitting up for us. And they won't miss us, either, till morning. Besides, as it's near a mile from home, they wouldn't hear if they were awake.'

"'And if they should hear, and come to see what was the matter, wouldn't the wolves get them?'" asked Kate.

"That had not occurred to us before. There was danger of it, certainly.

"'Let's tough it out, then, till morning!'" exclaimed Tom. 'It won't be a great while now.'

"'They'll go off as soon as it gets light,' said Kate. 'I've read that they always slink away at daylight.'

"As Kate was speaking, another howl was heard off in the forest. It was answered by the whole pack; and, in a few minutes, three others came straggling in. Thereupon they all sprang, snarling and snapping, at each other. Then they ran round the rock again; and the

new-comers made several attempts to leap upon it. But we were ready to receive them, and gave one of them so severe a stroke, that he measured his length upon the ground handsomely. As he fell, the others rushed upon him as if to tear him in pieces; but he jumped up, and shook them off.

"After a great deal of growling and grimacing, they returned to their old position in front of the rock, and sat down to watch us.

"Kate told a story she had read of wolves in Russia, — how they chased a sledge in which a family were travelling, and how the father had thrown out two of the children to the wolves in order to save the rest.

"And Ad told us how they catch wolves in India by digging pits for them.

"'But those are not this kind of wolves,' said Tom. 'These are gray wolves.'

"The night-air was chilly and damp. Despite the peril, the girls were shivering.

"'Let's give them another pelting, and so warm ourselves,' said Tom.

"We dug out another lot of stones, and, stripping off our jackets, let the girls wrap themselves in them while we pelted the wolves.

"'All ready now!' cried Ad, balancing a stone as large as his fist. 'Let's aim at that old gaunt one that came so near getting up here twice, — all three of us. See if we cannot kill him.'

"We all threw; and Tom hit him plump in the breast.

"The wolves all sprang up, howling.

“‘Keep your eye on him!’ cried Ad, catching up another stone.

“We all threw again; and Ad hit him hard on the head, fairly knocking him over: but he sprang to his feet as the rest of the wolves crowded upon him. I think Ad’s stone must have drawn blood; for all the others rushed at him, snapping their jaws. At our next throw, the stones, by a queer accident, all hit another wolf, bringing him to the ground instantly. He sprang up on three legs: the other seemed to be broken and helpless. The rest of the pack rushed upon him; and he ran limping off, with them at his heels. We heard them go cracking away into the woods on the other side of the road. A great howling and yelling arose; and in a short time they all came panting back again, — all save the one that went off on three legs. We saw no more of him.

“We stoned them at intervals during the night, but made no more such lucky hits.

“It seemed as if morning never would come, the hours crawled by so slowly. At last day broke, and the moonlight gradually gave place to daylight. The wolves grew uneasy. They howled, and hung about a while longer: then, one by one, like evil spirits of the night, they sneaked off into the woods.

“We waited till we were sure they had really departed; then came down from the rock, and reached home just as the folks were coming down stairs for the day. You can easily imagine their surprise when they learned how we had passed the night.

“The wolves skulked about the pastures during the rest of the fall. They were starved out of the forest,

people said. Several other persons had narrow escapes from them.

“I never go past the ‘Great Rock’ without a thankful feeling that it was placed just in that particular spot. Had it not been there, or if Kate had not thought of it as she did, we should never have reached home alive.”

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